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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-032 *16 February 1995*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Disarmament Committee Holds Meeting

'Positive Spirit' of Talks Noted

NC1502134495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1140 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—The Experts Committee of the Arab League Council entrusted with devising a draft Arab agreement to render the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction resumed its meetings this morning under the chairmanship of Ambassador Nu'man Jalal, the committee chairman and Egypt's permanent delegate at the Arab League.

Ambassador 'Adnan 'Umran, assistant Arab League secretary general for political affairs, said the committee's discussions, which began this morning, were characterized by a positive spirit and that they reflected a firm Arab stance to deal with the strategic disorder resulting from Israel's insistence on pursuing its nuclear program and its refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The committee is scheduled to conclude its meetings today after discussing all issues concerning the draft agreement, which has been prepared by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in cooperation with the Arab League Secretariat. The committee will submit its report to the Arab foreign ministers for discussion during the Arab League Council's next session in March.

Official Discusses NPT Issue

NC1502212295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2020 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—Ambassador 'Adnan 'Imran, Arab League Assistant Secretary General for Political and International Affairs, expressed his hope that the United States, in its capacity as Israel's major source of support, will exert real pressure on Israel to deter it from its intransigent stand on not signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

In press statements tonight at the conclusion of the meetings of the Arab League Council's subcommittee tasked with discussing the draft Arab agreement to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, Ambassador 'Imran said: By its insistence on and determination to prepare the tools of war and aggression, Israel has created a situation the continuation of which cannot be acceptable under any circumstances whatsoever.

He added: If Israel is really ready to be a partner in peace, as some of its officials are claiming, then it must prove it.

He went on to say: If Israel insists on having a monopoly on nuclear arms, this means that the language and mentality of war are still rife in the heads of Israel's generals.

He expressed the hope that Israel will change its policy of intransigence and rejection. He also expressed hope that some of the responsible major countries, especially the United States, will shoulder the responsibilities of the promises they have been making since 1968 to pressure Israel to stop being a force of aggression and not only to speak the language of peace but to really practice it on all negotiation tracks.

The Arab League official added: Despite the Israeli slogans and statements about a prosperous Middle East, development, and so on, they are at the same time insisting on maintaining the occupation and the settlements, confiscating the territories, and keeping hold of Jerusalem.

He said that the technical committee tasked with discussing the draft agreement on making the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction has completed the first reading of the document in full, noting that there was complete understanding between all the Arab delegations. He added that the agreement has many technical and legal aspects based on the premise that all Middle Eastern countries, including Israel and Iran, should be covered by a binding agreement that leads to the removal of all types of weapons of mass destruction from the region. He expressed hope that there will be full responses from the regional countries to achieve this objective, which is in the interest of everyone. He said: If one or two countries do not agree, then they will be responsible for the rejection.

He stressed that the Arab draft agreement presented by Egypt with the cooperation of the Arab League Secretariat General is in line with the UN view and the Arab League Charter's objectives and is based on peace, as reflected in the draft agreement.

Ambassador 'Imran said: We are presenting this draft as an Arab concept and a positive stand. He stressed that the Arab countries are eager not to have a nuclear arms race in the region and believe that it is better for the countries in the region to devote themselves to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. He added: The draft agreement will be completely ready for submission to the Arab League Council's 103rd ordinary session on 22 March. Once the Council approves it, there will be mechanisms, represented by the United Nations, the Security Council, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. He noted that the Arab stand will be ready to be incorporated in a law that makes the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. He said that this means the destruction of nuclear weapons if they exist and not possessing or storing any nuclear weapons.

He stressed that the technical committee will not meet before 22 March, noting that the Council's Secretariat General will prepare the final text of all that was agreed on and will refer it to all the member states so that they can study it in detail before the Council's meeting.

He said: The draft agreement involves two points. The first was completed at a former meeting held by the

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committee. There is complete agreement on it; no Arab country has any different views. This part concerns the drawing up of the joint Arab concept on the extension of the NPT. This Arab concept is ready for the Arab foreign ministers to discuss at their next session, especially as it had to be prepared somewhat hastily because the second meeting of the committee discussing the renewal of this treaty is due to be held in April.

He added: The second point concerns the Arab agreement freeing the Middle East countries from weapons of mass destruction. This requires a second reading at the ministerial level on 22 March.

Ambassador 'Imran explained that the Arab countries already underlined their good intentions when they endorsed the treaty successively since its establishment. They got promises then from the three guarantor countries that Israel would sign the NPT. He added: Israel has been refusing to sign it ever since the Arab countries did so. It has been refusing to sign it for 27 years. Not content with this, it has also worked and is working to strengthen the nuclear weapons arsenal and to provide it with the means of delivering these weapons to all the Arab countries.

Concluding his statements, he stressed that all the Arab countries without exception believe in peace as a strategic policy for the sake of the development and prosperity of the region's peoples. He denied press reports that the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are inclined to signing the NPT, describing these reports as baseless.

Committee Concludes Meeting

NC1502182095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—The technical committee under the Arab League Council that is tasked with discussing the Arab draft agreement to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction concluded its meeting this evening. The committee meeting, which was chaired by Dr. Nu'man Jalal, Egypt's permanent delegate to the Arab League, over the past two days discussed a draft agreement containing 14 articles involving all the technical and legal aspects relating to the agreement. The committee is scheduled to submit its report to the Arab foreign ministers for use in discussing the agreement during the Arab League's 103d session on 22 March.

League Urges Action on Israeli 'Inhuman Practices'

NC1502164095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1550 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—The Arab League Secretariat General called on the United States and Russia, the cosponsors of the Madrid conference, to confront the Israeli authorities' inhuman practices, which aim to Judaize the al-Ibrahimi Mosque by trying to alter its Islamic features. The League said this conflicts with the international efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

In a statement issued today to commemorate the martyrs of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, the Secretariat General called on the Security Council to send an international committee to examine the Israeli violations, not only in the occupied Palestinian territories, but also in all the Arab territories under Israeli occupation.

The statement added that these measures are a blatant violation of the sanctity of religious places, Security Council Resolutions 252 and 904, and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which allows no changes in the occupied territories or harm to be inflicted on citizens under occupation. It said these measures are also an obstacle to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Algeria-Tunisia Border Incident Said 'Traffic Accident'

MM1502110495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Feb 95 pp1, 4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Algeria: Belhadj in Desert Prison as Unprecedented Fierce Battles Rage On"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Over the past hours the security situation in Algeria deteriorated further reaching unprecedented levels with reports of extremely fierce battles raging in several areas in the east, west, and center of the country. The escalation comes against a background of a complete political deadlock following the suspension of the dialogue between the regime and the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]. Algerian sources close to the government have confirmed that FIS Deputy Leader Shaykh Ali Belhadj is in prison and that FIS Leader Shaykh Abassi Madani was going to be moved to prison but "sickness" prevented it.

AL-HAYAH reported last week that the two shaykhs had been moved to prison. Algeria officially denied it, but sources close to the government stressed to AL-HAYAH that the report was true but the authorities did not wish to make it public.

Belhadj, the same sources said, is in a prison in the extreme south of Algeria (Sahara). They added that Madani was taken to hospital "temporarily" after he fell ill.

Meanwhile, FIS sources stressed that nothing has been heard for about 10 days from Shaykh Belhadj who was moved from the Djenan El Mufti villa in the capital to an unknown destination, but they said that Oqbah Madani, Shaykh Abassi's son, had visited his father in hospital. [passage omitted]

Islamic sources said yesterday that the Algerian armed Islamic groups carried out an operation three days ago against a Tunisian border post near the Algerian border. They said that an armed group attacked the Tunisian

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border post of Sundus (near the Algerian southern border) killing seven border guards. The Algerian armed groups accuse the Tunisian regime of supporting its Algerian counterpart in all fields, including the military field of course.

AL-HAYAH has asked a Tunisian source if that report was true. He replied that it was nothing more than an ordinary traffic accident involving a National Guard (gendarmerie) Land Rover which fell in a ditch, and that two of the (six) occupants of the military vehicle were killed and four were injured. [passage omitted]

Islamic Affairs

Qatar University Cleric Discusses Islam, West

NC1202180095 Doha Qatar Television Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 14 Jan 95

[Interview with Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, director of the Center for Sura and Sunna Studies at Qatar University, by Muhammad al-Misfir on 14 January; place not given; from the "Dialogue on an Issue" program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Misfir] Shaykh Yusuf, religious ideologues often speak of secularism. Their views on this issue are based on each other's writings. Many of them do not consult the Christian Church's literary heritage as a reference. Hence, we wish to ask Shaykh Yusuf this question. Islamic religious thought believes secularism to be the same as atheism, although it has only separated state from church but does not isolate religion from society and life. The first separation is possible and necessary. Europe achieved it. The second separation is an illusion because no one has the power to separate religion from society. If you accept this view, why this mixing up of cards and these artificial quarrels that are designed to distract Muslim imams and the Muslim public?

[Al-Qaradawi] [passage omitted] Secularism is a foreign import to us Muslims. It had its justifications among Westerners. There was an ecclesiastical establishment that dominated them and a domineering church that backed ignorance against learning, stagnation against liberalism, and the kings against the masses. There was also the Inquisition. When the West came into contact with the Islamic East in al-Andalus [Spain] and Sicily and also during the Crusades, the West began to rise, awaken, and learn from the Muslims. The struggle then began in the West. It was inevitable that one of the two streams would triumph: either the stream of learning, liberalism, justice, intellectual pursuits, and invention, or the stream of stagnation and darkness. The stream of liberalism, learning, and intellect triumphed over the stream regrettably represented by the church. I am not saying it was Christianity that did this but the Western church. The people rebelled and, as written sources of those times show, said: Hang the last king with the intestines of the last monk. Revolutions arose and swept aside religion and politics. In the Islamic world, we do not need this because we have no conflict between learning and religion or between the intellect and the creed. To us, learning is religion and religion is learning. [passage omitted] We, the Muslims, do not have this problem. It is a borrowed issue. When it is raised, Muslim preachers, ulema, and intellectuals reject secularism in the sense that it separates religion from the state, society, and life. We are not like the Christians. The Christians do not have a shari'ah. Christianity is a system of beliefs, moral precepts, and ethics. Christians do not have a detailed shar'iah governing the affairs of life, the family, society, the state, and the economy. They do not have this shari'ah. We, however, have a shari'ah that comprises acts of worship, transactions, criminal offenses, and so on. It organizes life's affairs. We are enjoined to implement it. So judge between them by what God hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come down to thee. [Koranic verse] It is on this basis that we resist secularism if it has this sense. If secularism means learning and reason, we welcome it and indeed are enjoined to seek learning. If secularism, however, means that religion has no place in society, life, the economy, and politics, then we reject secularism. Religion has a bearing on all these matters. [passage omitted]

[Al-Misfir] Shaykh Yusuf, during a pan-Arab Islamic conference held in Beirut in October [year not specified], you submitted an estimable paper. You said in it that there is no such thing as a state in Islam but a civil state.

[Al-Qaradawi] I said there is no such thing as a theocracy in Islam, in the ecclesiastical sense.

[Al-Misfir] Yes, yes, but there is a civil state in Islam.

[Al-Qaradawi] Yes, yes.

[Al-Misfir] How do you explain this?

[Al-Qaradawi] I mean that the state that Islam wishes to establish is not a theocratic [preceding word in English] state as the description goes, that is not a state of the clergy. No, I mean a civil state to which the public gives allegiance and chooses its rulers not from the ranks of shaykhs and men of religion, but from the ranks of the most competent people who are strong, honest, and most capable of shouldering responsibility. [passage omitted]

[Al-Misfir] Some thinkers see a crisis between Islamic heritage and the modern world. This leads us to a discussion of the relation between Islam and the West: Is it a conflict, a cooperation, or what? Is there a conflict between the two sides in the current circumstances, in the modern age? Or is there is another option which, according to some thinkers, is not the ideal option?

[Al-Qaradawi] Actually, the problem does not lie with us but the West itself. Regrettably, the West is still ruled by complexes, notably the fear of Islam. Some Westerners describe Islam as the green threat now that the Red threat has vanished with the USSR's collapse and the

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yellow threat—China—is no longer a source of danger because the West has a rapprochement with it. They are saying that the new threat is the green one, the Islamic threat. [passage omitted] We urge a dialogue with the West and declare: It is time, O Westerners, to wipe off this old dust and turn over a new leaf. I am one of those who advocate dialogue with the West and with the secularists. The conference to which you referred brought Islamists and pan-Arabists together at the same meeting. I found nothing wrong with that. We are close together on fateful issues and stand in one closed rank against the dangers that threaten us all. Similarly, we tell the Westerners, who are People of the Book: Let us form united ranks against atheism, the tide of moral dissolution and permissiveness, social injustices, and moral corruption. We are advocating dialogue with the West but, regrettably, the West is not dealing with us in the same spirit. However, I have noticed that in the case of some Western intellectuals, we are close together. [passage omitted]

[Al-Misfir] It is good to hear a jurisprudent and a preacher advocating dialogue with other religions. However, is it not better to advocate dialogue among the various Islamic sects? There is a conflict and a very big controversy among some schools of jurisprudence, particularly Sunni ones, and some are accusing the followers of other Islamic schools of jurisprudence of being infidels. The venerable al-Azhar, in the days of Shaykh Shaltut, may God have mercy on his soul, and others, sought to encourage inter-Muslim dialogue to entrench the concept of unity among the Muslims. Instead of seeking a dialogue with the Europeans, should we not examine the strong disagreement in our ranks that frequently reaches the point of calling each other infidel? Matters sometimes reach the point where prayer leaders are called infidels. To what extent can a more comprehensive dialogue among the various Islamic sects be a more worthy pursuit than with the Europeans?

[Al-Qaradawi] In one aspect of the matter, your view is right. Some Muslim sects, regrettably, have gone so far in their extremism that they declare others nonbelievers. Years ago a group called the repudiation [al-takfir] group appeared. Its appearance had well- known reasons. However, these groups are portrayed as more important than they actually are. They are very limited groups, though they are vocal. Some media try to give them prominence. About 20 years ago, I wrote a treatise called The Phenomenon of Exaggerated Judgments of Disbelief [zahirat al-ghuluw fi al-takfir]. I considered it a very dangerous phenomenon. Judging others to be nonbelievers is proper only when they deserve to be called that. However, judging someone who does not deserve to be called a nonbeliever simply because his views differ from yours is unacceptable. Islam advises the strictest caution before judging people to be nonbelievers because calling someone a nonbeliever means putting him beyond the pale of Islam. Putting him beyond the pale of Islam means a death sentence to him, morally and physically. The prevailing view among the majority of jurisprudents is that an apostate must be killed. Some jurisprudents, including al-Nakh'i and al-Thawri, disagree. They say he should be allowed to live but must be jailed and then offered to return to Islam in order to remove any doubts about his faith. If I call someone a nonbeliever, this means that I have sentenced him to moral and physical execution because he must be cast aside by society, separated from his wife and children because an apostate cannot be entrusted with the care of children and since he is no longer a Muslim, he cannot have a Muslim wife. It is a very serious matter and for this reason great caution must be exercised. A case of suspected apostasy must be meticulously examined. The ulema say that if someone commits an act or utters a remark that might be seen as proving nonbelief in 99 aspects but showing belief in only one aspect, it is this last aspect that we must consider in order to preserve the suspected person's Muslim piety and keep him within the Muslim community. This exaggerated zeal in accusing others of nonbelief is a dangerous phenomenon. Intellectuals must resist it. Just as I have called for dialogue with non-Muslims, I have called for a dialogue among the Muslims themselves. As I noted above, I have also called for a dialogue with secularists, as well as people who simply have different views from us on some religious matters. [passage omitted]

[Al-Misfir] Shaykh Yusuf, a politically motivated Western onslaught is being waged against the Arabs and Muslims. You have mentioned the veil and terrorism issues and the fact that Westerners are being encouraged to be afraid of Islam and Muslims, particularly the Arabs, because they are the bearers of the Book and because the Revelation was made in Arabic to an Arab prophet. This onslaught, or campaign, is designed to destroy Islam and the Arabs. Every attack occurring anywhere in the world, in New York, Argentina, Japan, or Italy is being ascribed to an Arab Muslim. All such attacks in 1994 were ascribed to Muslims. What explanation can you give to this phenomenon, particularly in light of the controversy over the Islamic issue in Egypt? It is being described as a terrorist movement rather than as an Islamic movement. Some are saying it is a movement imported from the West, others call it the movement of the hungry, and still others describe it as an Islamic reawakening. What does Shaykh al-Qaradawi think of all this?

[Al-Qaradawi] I wish to state this: I do not subscribe to the conspiracy theory in history. A certain school interprets events according to the conspiracy theory. They say this or that event is the result of Jewish, Communist, or Crusader scheming. When we do this, we ignore domestic factors and motives. In the Koran there is a comment on the 'Uhud battle [early Muslim defeat]: What! When a single disaster smites you, although ye smote your enemies with one twice as great, do ye say: Whence is this? Say it is from yourselves.

Actually, I don't try to blame everything on the West. Still, we do not want to be blind to the facts. The West has a big role in what is happening to us. It sometimes

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helps create something, sometimes nurtures it, and sometimes pours fuel on it to keep it burning. The West, regrettably, has a hand in what is happening in Egypt, Algeria, and in more than one other country. However, there are domestic factors. In Algeria, for instance, the West forestalled the wishes of the Algerian public. The public elected the Islamists. We tell them: Try the Islamists as you tried others. Algeria was under a Marxist-influenced socialist-military government for 30 years. Try the Islamists now as you tried others. Why do you have this fear of Islam? The fear of Islam, as I have noted, is behind these phenomena. As a result, when young men find their way blocked, find themselves hemmed in, and find no public outlet, they will necessarily go underground. This is what is happening in Egypt and Algeria. We want Islam to be given the right to operate in full daylight as other groups and political parties do. In Egypt for instance there is a party that represents the communists and other leftists. It is the National Progressive Unionist Grouping. Why don't the Islamists have a political party? There are Islamists on the political scene and you acknowledge their presence. Whenever they contest the elections of any union, a student council, or a teachers association, they win overwhelmingly. Therefore, they have strong grassroots. Why don't you then recognize their right to operate and let them operate in the open instead of operating in the dark? Moreover these people represent the moderate stream. They stand for moderation and sobriety. If you do not give these people the right to operate, you will leave the arena open for the extremists. There are many mistakes. What is happening in Egypt is governed by many factors. Many of the actions that these young men perpetrate are a form of revenge.

[Al-Misfir] Revenge against whom?

[Al-Qaradawi] Revenge against the government. They now have a feud with the government, with the police. You know, these young men are natives of Upper Egypt. A native of Upper Egypt never abandons a feud, particularly in connection with two very important matters: to avenge a killing or to redress a dishonor. If you kill me and kill my friend or violate my honor, I will fight with fierce desperation. These young men believe that the police have killed their friends, raided and searched their homes, and violated their family honor. This is how they think. They say: We are fighting to defend our blood and honor. The affair has now entered the sphere of feud. Feuding is an endless process.

[Al-Misfir] If you allow me, let me take you back to the recent past, five or 10 years. In those days the Islamic movement was relatively active in Egypt. Some of this activity was originally carried out in the open, dating back to Shaykh Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and al-Hudaybi. The Islamic movement was described as purely religious. It was not labelled as terrorist or anything like that simply because it was opposed to any ruling regime. Nowadays, Islamic movements have been termed terrorist because they are found in states with governments that have a certain relationship, to a certain point, with the West. Out of fear for Western interests and the interests of those governments, the movements are called terrorist. Formerly they were seen as doing valuable, revivalist work that must be given an opportunity, as happened in the 1960's and the mid-1950's.

[Al-Qaradawi] Part of this description is not fully acceptable. The Islamic movement was never purely religious. It is a comprehensive Islamic movement. Islam is not merely a religion; it is world and spirit. It consists of creed and jihad; worship and leadership; a Koran and a sword. It is a comprehensive program of life. Moreover, even in the past the Islamic movement was accused of terrorism but that happened in particular circumstances when it resisted the British and fought in the Palestine war. Recently, however, the Islamic movement has begun to represent moderation. It has profited from its experiences and calls for peacefulness, dialogue, and a return to the grassroots. It operates alongside the people. This is what we want. The current problem is that the West has begun to level a new charge at the Islamic phenomenon every now and then. At one time, Islam was accused of extremism. This description has now been discarded.

The prevailing cry now is: Beware of aggressive Islam. Extremist Islam is not dangerous. It is aggressive Islam that is more dangerous. Extremists do not last long. Those who can last are the aggressors. Islam can never be moderate. It begins moderate and then turns extreme.

This is a summary of the ideas they have about Islam. Sometimes they use the term political Islam. Is there any such thing as political Islam, spiritual Islam, and social Islam? Islam is a religion and a spiritual, social, and economic system. Islam cannot be a monastic religion. There is no monasticism in Islam.

Nowadays, they are using the following two terms: fundamentalism and terrorism. Shim'on Peres claims that there are three global threats: hunger, narcotics, and fundamentalism and they must be opposed.

What is fundamentalism? Such terms are ambiguous and bear more than one interpretation. Do you call everyone who clings to his religion a fundamentalist? Fundamentalism, meaning going back to the origins, is not frightening. One of our common sayings is: He who loses his origins cannot reach his destination. If fundamentalism means clinging to the origins of Islam, preaching it, and carrying out jihad for its sake, then all of us are fundamentalists. This leaves us with the term terrorism. Who is a terrorist? Is it one who defends his homeland? They are now describing the Islamic Resistance Movement and Islamic Jihad in Palestine as terrorists. They are describing the struggler brothers in Kashmir, the fighters in Chechnya, and everyone who fights to defend his land and sanctities as terrorists. About one month ago a new television program appeared in the United States. The program, prepared by a Jew, speaks regrettably about the Muslims and Islam in the United States. The program

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stated that U.S. Muslims carry out acts of terrorism, hold terrorist conferences, and invite terrorist preachers to address them. Among the terrorist preachers that the program named was one named Yusuf al-Qaradawi [laughs]. The program quoted some of my remarks during the days when the intifidah was at its height. The Palestinians in the United States held a meeting on the sidelines of one of the conferences. Of course we spoke encouraging words to them. The program used a shot from that meeting and claimed that I was advocating terrorism. It's like citing the first part of the Koranic verse: Do not perform prayers, and leaving out the second part: while you are drunk.

This is the kind of talk that Westerners spread about terrorism. We are against terrorism if it means mass bloodshed, indiscriminate killing, and the killing of people who have been given security, monks, priests, and tourists. Islam laid down precise rules for these matters. There are shari'ah rules specifying those who deserve to be killed and those who do not deserve to be killed. Blurring the distinctions between all these matters is unacceptable. We reject it. We also reject accusing those defend their rights, their homeland's sovereignty, and their livelihood of being terrorists. Confusing matters in this way is unacceptable. [passage omitted]

[Al-Misfir] Shaykh al-Qaradawi and other leading religious thinkers speak about all the tragedies of the Islamic world and what befalls Muslim women in Bosnia- Herzegovina, the Philippines, and southeast Asia. They speak about all Islamic regions, most recently Chechnya, but make only passing references to the hardships suffered by the steadfast Muslim women, old men, and children in Palestine. If these preachers mention these steadfast people at all, for instance in the closing sentences of their Friday sermons or closing paragraphs of their conference statements, they merely call down God's blessings on them. There is another tragedy, connected with the invasion of Kuwait. Four years have now passed and a nation—full of old men, sick or healthy, children, and women—is living in a crisis, suffering from the cold, from sickness, lack of medicine, lack of schools, and hunger. According to one statistic, 60,000 children died in 1964 [as heard] because of a shortage of medicines. Shaykh al-Qaradawi's loyalists and the disciples of his school of jurisprudence do not hear him saying much about this issue. Is there a reason for this silence?

[Al-Qaradawi] Regarding the Palestinian issue, I consider it the primary Islamic cause. It is the issue of the conflict between us and the Jews in the land of prophecies, sanctities, and the destination of the Prophet's night journey. Recently I was talking about this issue during a ceremony marking the anniversary of the Prophet's night journey to heaven and Jerusalem. This anniversary always brings to mind the link between the Prophet's mosque [in Medina] and al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem]. We can never forget the Palestinian issue or regard it as marginal. However, there are other issues, the Chechnya issue for instance. We cannot ignore the Chechens, a poor nation which is being bombarded from the air and subjected to tank attacks by a great, nuclear power. That power did not need to do all this. How can we remain silent about such a matter? Some things forcibly come to the fore. As to Iraq's issue, I certainly was one of those who opposed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. We regarded Iraq as the aggressor. This does not mean that the issue should last forever. Iraq withdrew and formally recognized Kuwait. Why should the sanctions be maintained against the Iraqi people? The Iraqis are not all Saddam Husayn. As you mentioned, there are women, old men, children, and civilians—a whole nation of people involved. This is why we say that the West really does not view us, the Arabs and Muslims, as it views other nations. It views us from a different perspective and for this reason it adopts this attitude to Iraq and adopts a hardline position on Libya and Iran. Why all this? We are calling for an end to the Iraqi people's hardships, the suffering of children and our brothers in Iraq. We are the same nation. We disagreed with Iraq for a while but this attitude must not continue to govern us forever. I reproach an Arab who continues to be governed by what happened during that period. That period is over and matters must return to normal. Arab ranks must again be closed. We are the same nation, with the same religion, territory, destiny, aspirations, and sufferings. We must sympathize with each other and be like one body where if one of its limbs hurts, the rest of the body will become feverish and sleepless.

[Al-Misfir] Ever since the Gulf War, specifically the Kuwait war, numerous Islamic rulings [fatwas] have been issued. Some supported the [dispatch of foreign] forces to the region and others rejected it. Nowadays, other fatwas are being issued sanctioning cooperation or peace with the Israelis. Many fatwas are being issued in Damascus, Amman, and Riyadh. Shaykh al-Qaradawi has also expressed an opinion on this matter. Is it not possible to establish a higher body to issue such fatwas and prevent a situation where everyone is making fatwas? This would seem to be particularly important in connection with volatile political issues. If we formed such a body we would be following the example of the adherents of the Muslim Ja'farite sect. They have a supreme fatwa committee and no one is permitted to intervene in its fatwas unless he belongs to that jurisprudent school.

[Al-Qaradawi] It is definitely regrettable that we have contradictory fatwas, particularly on major issues. In normal everyday matters pertaining to worship and such things, it is no problem when people disagree. The Muslims in the past knew the strict fatwas of Ibn-'Umar and the easy fatwas of Ibn-'Abbas. However, when it comes to major issues where people must be shown which path to follow, contradictory fatwas can cause confusion. Nevertheless, it is not easy to form a committee such as the one you advocate. Who will form this body? The governments? There are existing fatwa bodies but, regrettably, they are formed by the governments. The largest jurisprudent authority is that of the Islamic

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Conference Organization. It represents all the Islamic countries and each member country sends a representative who is not necessarily his country's best 'allamah. Usually he is close to the awqaf minister or the minister in charge of religious affairs. Egypt is represented by one scholar. Does this mean that Egypt has only one 'allamah? Only one 'allamah represents Pakistan, Syria, and so on. Hence, this body does not represent all the ulema of the Muslim world and we cannot say that any fatwa it issues represents something close to a consensus view. Additionally, there will be pressures or influences by the state which finances the jurisprudent body or on whose territory it stands. Clearly there is not enough freedom to form such a jurisprudent body. This is our problem. If we called for forming a really free committee that is not under the authority of any government, where will you build it, in what country? Who will finance it? But fatwas must be issued. Let some ulema issue fatwas and others respond to them. Eventually it will become apparent which fatwa is correct. Actually, the differences over these matters are caused either because shari'ah is not clear on a certain matter or because the fatwa is not based on the facts. Take the example of the scholar who cites the Koranic verse: But if they incline toward peace, do thou also incline toward peace. Can the Jews really be regarded as inclined toward peace? These people usurped the land. They are like someone who takes your house and then offers to give you one room in return for peace. Can you regard this person as inclined toward peace? Can we view the party that wants to build settlements and that continues to usurp the land as being inclined toward peace? In this case, the scholar who makes the fatwa does not see the facts clearly. Another example is that of the jurisprudent who cites the Prophet's acceptance of a truce with the Quraysh tribe. We ask: Is what has been concluded with Israel a mere truce or a complete recognition that it now has sovereignty over this land, including Acre, Jaffa, Haifa, Lydda, and Ramlah, and that we have no right to it or even the right to demand one inch of this territory? Recognition is something completely different from a truce. Jurisprudence must be based on the facts. We disagree with the ulema who make such fatwas because they do not understand the facts as we understand them. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Presidency Official Previews Rabin-'Arafat Talks

JN1502160395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Interview with al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary of the Palestinian Authority presidency, by Fathi al-Barqawi on 15 February; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Do you expect anything new to come out of tomorrow's meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin?

['Abd-al-Rahim] We hope the Cairo and Taba conferences and the recent Washington conference sent messages to Mr. Rabin not to make tomorrow's meeting something similar to previous meetings. We are committed to implementing the Declaration of Principles [DOP] and demand that the Israeli side implement this agreement, especially the timetables whose implementation is long overdue; namely, the redeployment of forces, elections, handing over of the remaining powers, and amending current laws, as well as points in the Gaza and Jericho agreement which have been delayed, such as crossings and safe passage.

[Al-Barqawi] Let us suppose that, tomorrow, Rabin proposes the redeployment of the Israeli army. What would be the Palestinian conditions in this regard?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Some time ago, the Israeli side offered to withdraw from certain areas in the West Bank, that is, redeployment in some areas. We said if they wanted to withdraw from Janin or Bethlehem, for instance, this should be within a plan, a definite and agreed timetable so that we might know the exact times: Today from Janin, tomorrow from Bethlehem, 10 days from now from Nabulus, then Ramallah, then al-Birah; that is, gradually and within a period not exceeding three months.

[Al-Barqawi] In stages, of course?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Yes, in stages and in accordance with a definite and agreed timetable.

[Al-Barqawi] Will tomorrow's meeting discuss any other issues?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Of course, all the issues that we have already discussed and which they promise to carry out.

[Al-Barqawi] The closure will be an added issue?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Then, if an incident takes place, they will dissociate themselves from them. I am convinced the Israelis always seek pretexts. Even before the recent violent operations broke out, the Israeli were saying that timetables are not sacred, are not divine. They did not comply with them. Now they take violence as a pretext. God knows what will be the pretext tomorrow. In my opinion, some are trying to wash their hands of the Oslo agreement, which in my view benefited the Palestinian people and the Israelis. Some Palestinians are doing an injustice to it. It gave us the unity of the people, the unity of representation, and the territories occupied in 1967.

[Al-Barqawi] Can we say that you are alluding to Israel?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Israel, as well as the Palestinian opposition. Israel wants to wash its hand of the Oslo agreement because the DOP opens the way for a Palestinian state. There are intra-Israeli differences. Some Palestinian opposition forces take the Oslo agreement as a pretext when Israel violates the agreement. It is always the habit of the Palestinian opposition to oppose each step by the PLO leadership, or, let me say, the Fatah leadership, such as the interim plan, or the establishment

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of the Palestinian state. This Palestinian opposition would approve of such as step one or two years later, and agree that it was a strategic step.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you, Brother al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim.

PA Said 'Flexible' on Timetable for Redeployment

TA1502125595 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 15 Feb 95 p 2

[Report by Lamia Lahoud]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian Authority officials [PA] say the Palestinians are ready to accept a gradual redeployment plan for the territories which takes the security needs of both sides into account, but that they want some kind of timetable.

PA official Hasan 'Asfur said the Palestinians are flexible concerning the timetable for redeployment. This, he said, is a new position.

According to 'Asfur, the PA insists that elections and redeployment remain linked, as mentioned in the DOP [Declaration of Principles]. He said the PA thus prefers to hold off Palestinian general elections until the redeployment of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops from all population centers has been completed. 'Asfur believes a draft agreement on elections can be formulated in Cairo next week.

Another PA official said Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin proposed two scenarios for redeployment to PA head Yasir 'Arafat: either an IDF withdrawal from all the territories for a few days during Palestinian elections or starting detailed talks on a gradual redeployment plan. The official said the Palestinians accept the second proposal, but insist on a timetable defining a reasonable limit for the redeployment.

Special UN coordinator Terje Larsen said he discussed the crisis created by the Bet Lid bombing with 'Arafat before and after last week's Rabin-'Arafat and believes 'Arafat is ready to offer security guarantees to the Israelis, but needs some tangible actions on the ground in return.

Larsen, a Norwegian, was one of the initiators of the secret talks in Oslo between the PLO and Israel and acted as mediator. Based on his talks with 'Arafat, he believes a partial withdrawal of IDF troops from one or two populated areas in the territories, the deployment of some kind of international presence there alongside the Palestinian Police, and a long-term timetable for the rest of the redeployment would help resolve the deadlock of the present crisis.

'Arafat, he said, must then offer specific security measures to the Israelis—like trying some of those involved in attacks against Israelis—and Larsen believes he is willing to do so. In fact, he said, 'Arafat has taken more security measures than have been published in the press. He said 'Arafat is eager to demonstrate that he is in control.

According to Larsen, the PA head asked him to convey a letter to the UN secretary-general asking the UN to intervene and help solve the crisis.

Marwan al-Barghuthi, the general secretary of Fatah in the territories, did not want to comment on the PA's position on redeployment, but he accused the Israelis of breaking every agreed upon point in the Oslo agreement. "The Oslo agreement talks about evacuation of population centers and redeployment of IDF troops before elections. The Israelis, it seems, are talking about redeployment of the Palestinian population instead," he said.

Islamic Jihad Leader Discusses Peace, Syria

NC1502112595 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 11

[Interview with Islamic Jihad Secretary General Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi by 'Ali Jamalu; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Jamalu] Let us begin with the position of Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian mosaic.

[Al-Shaqaqi] Islamic Jihad is one of the forces in the broad Palestinian spectrum. It stands in the ranks of the opposition and resistance. If we are to discuss this mosaic, there are three basic trends: The Islamic trend represented by Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad; the democratic trend represented by organizations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and the nationalist and pan-Arab trend represented by Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, and the other nationalist factions. We work together within the Alliance of Palestinian Forces. We notice the poor performance of this alliance, but we are still willing to keep it, hoping to heighten this performance. There is also bilateral or trilateral cooperation on both theoretical and practical issues.

I believe that the voice of opposition or the voice of the forces of confrontation is today strong in Palestine, especially after the Oslo team demonstrated its great misery. Over one year ago, when the Oslo agreement was signed, it was easy to deceive a portion of the Palestinian people by saying that the agreement marked the beginning of the road toward national independence, toward the establishment of a Palestinian state, toward an end to suffering, and toward the liberation of the people and the creation of a new Singapore in the Middle East. But we gradually found out that the Oslo team had only one mission: To maintain Israel's security, nothing more. We learned that the Gaza-Jericho First Agreement is actually Gaza-Jericho first and last and that what the Israelis did was only to rid themselves of the burden and hell of the Gaza Strip.

[Jamalu] What about the relationship between Islamic Jihad and Hamas?

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[Al-Shaqaqi] Our relations with Hamas are excellent. In addition to the ideological harmony, there is political harmony. It is true that coordination on the ground is not up to expectations but we meet and we have a joint desire to develop our cooperation on the ground so that we can perform like a unified front.

[Jamalu] You mean there is political cooperation but not joint military action?

[Al-Shaqaqi] So far there has been no joint military action but there is good political coordination and there are identical political views.

[Jamalu] Let us discuss the Islamic movement in the region. I believe there is an attempt [by the West] to abuse the name and the role of this movement with a view to creating a new enemy for the West. Will you please shed some light on this?

[Al-Shaqaqi] First, I would like to start by rejecting the term "fundamentalism" as used by the West. Some Islamists in the region liked the term, believing it to be a genuine Islamic term meaning return to the origin, and believing it to exist in Islamic jurisprudence. They liked it because of the Islamic tradition it implies. But fundamentalism, as proposed by the West, is a Western experience meaning literalism, that is, literal understanding of religious texts and failure to deal with them in an open spirit and with the ability to interpret or develop things. The Westerners sometimes add to the term a sense of desire to reach objectives through violence. We reject this Western understanding of fundamentalism. I say we are not fundamentalists in this sense; we are Islamists first and foremost.

Today, following the collapse of the countries of the Eastern camp, the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc in general, and the collapse of the evil empire, as the Americans called it, they are looking for another evil empire. They are looking for an alternative enemy, which is, regrettably, something intellectual circles in the West, along with known political and imperialist circles, are saying. This alternative enemy is Islam. They are linking violence with Islam. This is wrong. Violence is not an Islamic option. No one has an interest in spreading freedom and the democratic option. [sentence as published] The Islamists see themselves as the representatives of the nation, the representatives of the people's will. So why should they seek to achieve their objectives through violence? There is a possible democratic option and the possible spreading of freedom. My view is that the violence in the region comes from some Islamists, from a small section of the Islamists, while the overwhelming majority of the Islamic organizations are patient, keeping quite, and not confronting state terrorism with violence.

The violence is coming from small groups and is, in my view, a response to some old terrorism. I take the Algerian issue as an example. We know that the Islamic movement in Algeria in general was welcomed through the democratic option. It took part in the elections. Though there were a few voices criticizing this course and doubting the authorities' integrity, the whole Islamic movement headed in the direction of the democratic option. We know that in June (1991), most of the Islamic Salvation Front leaders were arrested and very badly treated before any violence erupted. That is one of the forms of the state's violence and terrorism. Yet the Islamic movement remained patient and entered the elections in the absence of its historic leaders and founders. The ballot boxes revealed the people's choice of Islam but the army crushed these boxes, started to put the figures chosen by the people in prison, and started to cram the Islamists into detention camps. It is within this context that groups appeared and developed as a reaction to this violence practiced by the state.

I personally confirm that the Islamists have no interest in violence. No sane man wants to see civil war. The restrictions on freedom and the tension created by some authorities sometimes cause this violence, which in the first place is a feature of the age, not that of the Islamists. We know that throughout the century the left rather than the Islamists expressed the phenomenon of violence. I reiterate that the Islamists in general are open to the world, including the West itself, but it is not the openness of a slave toward his master, but an openness of equals. It is the openness of a master toward a master. We are open to all existing forces and trends inside the Arab homeland and inside the nation. The issue of negating the other side does not exist in Islamic history, except in abnormal cases, but not within the historic context. We believe in the need for pluralism because this is the natural thing. No one can cancel something that is natural. More than this, we also believe in the principle of the rotation of power, which could be an incentive for creativity, not in the entrenchment of a ruler in power, a ruler who does not want to be moved from power; this is what kills creativity.

[Jamalu] How are your relations with the other Islamic organizations, now that we have heard your views on Algeria's experience?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Many people believe Islamic Jihad is an international organization. But this is untrue, as I said at the beginning. The Islamic Jihad Organization is an independent combatant Islamic Palestinian movement that has no organizational relationship with any other movement in the region with the same name. But the general Islamic bond, the Islamic strategic goals, and the ideological premises—bearing in mind the natural plurality—bind us. Some parties are opposed to democracy and in my view these differences or disputes are over the term, not the content. There is no dispute among us over the essence of democracy. There are common bonds between us and with all Islamists in the region. But this does not prevent us from criticizing them. We believe that criticism is necessary to promote the Islamists' performance to a stage of awareness compatible with the historical awareness that can apply to the world of today.

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Through our knowledge of the Koran, history, realities, and the world, we seek, with all our strength, to entrench this form of awareness within the Islamic movements and its entire spectrum. We want all these movements to reach what I might call an awareness that is compatible with the world, because without this we will not be true witnesses of the people, as the holy Koran teaches.

[Jamalu] How do you view the future of these Islamic movements?

[Al-Shaqaqi] I believe the Islamic trend is the future trend. The Islamic trend is not one of stagnation, backwardness, or isolation. It embodies an awareness that is compatible with the world and is consistent with the nation's heritage, will, and aspirations. The Islamic trend does not reject plurality within and around it and considers all Muslims the sons of one nation so that there will be no conflicts triggered by negating the other party. I believe we have been through numerous experiences that have been an utter failure. I do not want to suggest that the national pan-Arab experience was a failure. I mean the ideas and thoughts that originated in another climate, history, and realities. We sowed these ideas without examining their nature and the nature of our land. Some of our sons went abroad to study and came back with unhealthy seeds to sow in an inappropriate climate.

[Jamalu] I still want to hear your answer to my question: How do you view the future of the Islamic movements?

[Al-Shaqaqi] The Islamic movement is an original and pioneering part of the nation. It enjoys a high level of credibility and is highly representative of the nation. Consequently, the future of the nation and of the Islamic movement are, in my view, in tandem. The Islamic awakening of the past 20 years will inevitably bear fruit and the enlightened revolutionary Islamic trend will triumph sooner or later. There is no longer any real resistance to this trend and no power can confront it. No power other than the Islamic movement can confront global arrogance. The Islamic movement is destined to triumph sooner or later.

[Jamalu] Some media have been reporting that the United States asked Syria to deport you. Is this true?

[Al-Shaqaqi] I heard the same thing as you but actually none of the Syrian brothers have contacted me. What I would like to say is that I was expelled from Palestine almost seven years ago as a result of a decision by Rabin. Rabin exiled me. He knew I would go somewhere, not disappear into a vacuum. I know that for some years now there have been discussions inside the Israeli Government on who made the mistake of exiling me. Why was he exiled? Why was he not kept in prison? What I am saying is that Rabin's government now regrets deciding to exile me. They are now trying to pursue me or the movement in the Arab capitals, particularly in Damascus. I tell them that this pressure will only bring them greater losses and regret. We respect the hospitality of any Arab country we go to, particularly Syria, the circumstances of which we appreciate as well as appreciating the amount of pressure being applied to it. We realize the conspiracy being woven against it in the region. Whether we are in Damascus or elsewhere, we do not send fighters [into Palestine]. All our people inside Palestine are yearning to fight, more than ever. We do not send in weapons either. We get our weapons from the Zionist soldiers and their training camps, as they have admitted often. Therefore they are faulting themselves, not faulting Syria or any other state. Outside Palestine, we have political and media activities. I have often said that we challenge the U.S. Administration or any other state to prove that we fired one shot against any Western interests or outside Palestine in general. We see no reason to apply pressure on Syria. Ever since the establishment of the Zionist entity, Syria has considered itself to be in a state of war with the enemy occupying its land. It believes it is the Palestinian people's right to resist the occupation on their own territory. This is a right granted even by UN laws. So why should an Arab country like Syria not grant us this right? Proceeding from this, I believe that the pressure being applied on Syria is part of the greater conspiracy to politically blackmail it into retreating from its stance and accepting any peace, the Zionist-American peace under Zionist conditions, as 'Arafat and the king of Jordan have done.

I would like to repeat that the Syrians have not contacted us, because we are here as Arab guests and Damascus is open to all Arab citizens. We have no official presence here. This place I am sitting in now is my home, not an official office for the Jihad organization. The official office and official and major headquarters are in Jerusalem, in Nabulus, Ramallah, Gaza, and all over occupied Palestine, as is proven by events and as the facts tell. They must look under their own feet, not export their crisis abroad.

As I have said, after I was exiled I moved around among many Arab capitals, one of which was Damascus. I ruled out any kind of peace being established. I ruled out that Syria or any self-respecting Arab country would accept the Zionist conditions that the Americans and the Israelis are trying to impose on Syria. Even if peace is established, it will only be a transient peace based on an unjust balance of power that must change. Whether this happens or not, it will not affect the activities of our movement, because, as I have said, we do not send in fighters from Syria and we do not send weapons from here. We fight inside Palestine and our basic force is inside Palestine. All our media and political efforts are concentrated outside toward helping and supporting our brethren inside Palestine. Our burdens in Damascus or any other Arab capital are very light burdens or weights to carry. So we can move around anywhere without embarrassing anyone. The important thing is that our brethren inside the territories should continue their steadfastness and their jihad. This steadfastness and jihad do not depend on one specific person or his whereabouts.

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[Jamalu] Your activities have recently escalated. Could you please explain this to me?

[Al-Shaqaqi] First, I consider the military action that has taken place to be part of our strategic methods to confront the occupation. Ever since the Oslo Agreement and its repercussions, we have felt that there has been a great rush toward further fragmenting the region, canceling its identity, infiltrating it, and imposing hegemony over it. Relations inside the region are proceeding on an economic basis, not on an ideological, civilized, or nationalist basis. This means that greater differences among the region's countries over confronting the forces that support the Zionist enemy will lead to a new Middle East in which Israel is the central, major, hegemonizing power. The regional and historic role of ancient capitals such as Damascus, Cairo, and others will be canceled. This is all they want for the region through the Gaza-Jericho gateway, through the Oslo gateway. We are exerting an extraordinary effort to topple this destructive agreement. This is an objective we have declared individually, within the alliance of Palestinian forces, or as part of our people's strategy since the Oslo Agreement. As long as we are capable, we will continue to invent new ways to topple this agreement through armed struggle against the Zionist enemy. Despite this enemy being armed and taking unprecedented security precautions and measures, it will be shocked every time the Islamic Jihad strikes at it from the most unexpected places.

[Jamalu] But there are sandbags between you and the Zionist enemy. And these sandbags are the Palestinian police. Proceeding from this, will you fall into the trap of confrontation with the Palestinian Authority?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We know that this Authority is stupid and foolish and that it could get into something like that. But we are doing our utmost to avoid an armed clash with this Authority. We do not want to fire a single bullet at any Palestinian. We always say that when they shoot at us we will intensify our fire against the occupation so that we do not help the occupation realize its goal of starting a civil war inside Palestine. This does not mean that we will stand with our arms folded before the role the Self-Rule Authority is playing in protecting the security of the Zionist entity and oppressing and striking at the mujahidin. We are mobilizing our people and preparing them for a massive and popular confrontation with this Authority in which no blood is shed and no weapons are used.

[Jamalu] What are your relations with Hizballah and how do you view their experiments?

[Al-Shaqaqi] The relationship is a strategic alliance toward the same goal. The credit goes to Hizballah and the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon for the suicide operations inside Palestine. Since 1983 such operations have been the dream of every Palestinian youth inside Palestine. I acknowledge that our mujahidin proceeded along this road. Every day Hizballah proves the possibility of defeating the enemy and the possibility that the nation can triumph. Regrettably, Hizballah is isolated by the Arabs more than it is isolated by the Israelis and the Americans. Hizballah is even alienated by some Arab media, which refer to it as the group that calls itself Hizballah. These people consider themselves Arabs and Muslims. The Resistance in Lebanon is a bright light in this dark Arab night. It gives all of us hope. All the serious and honest people must unite their efforts to protect, preserve, and spread this light. This is a position I wanted to note in favor of this great party and Resistance, the secretary general of which was martyred almost three years ago. Then the Resistance became even more adamant about continuing its struggle; it didn't use it as an excuse to back down, as was hoped, as the enemy dreamed it would. A party the secretary general of which is martyred is undoubtedly a blessed, great, and extraordinary party.

[Jamalu] What about your relations with the Islamist organizations in Egypt?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We have no direct relations with any Islamist organization in Egypt. Our battlefields or confrontation arenas are different. But we happened to meet some symbols of the Islamic Jihad in Egypt when we were students in Egypt. But we have no organizational ties with those brothers.

[Jamalu] How do you view their themes?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We urge all sides in Egypt to halt the cycle of violence. We often addressed our Islamist brothers on this issue. They always said they would be quite prepared to do so when the state or the regime releases their prisoners and detainees and leaves them to enjoy the freedom of work and to act to promote Islam like the other existing political forces. They say that these are their only demands, but the regime in Egypt insists on persecuting them through security measures and the use of force. But we will continue our efforts to persuade all the sides in Egypt to stop the cycle of violence and reinforce freedom as a solution to the crisis.

[Jamalu] Do you think military operations will continue in the occupied territories, like those that were recently carried out?

[Al-Shaqaqi] This is the ambition of all mujahidin. We have the willpower and we will always be prepared to choose the appropriate time to carry out such jihad operations against Zionist terrorism. They [the Israelis] always try to mislead the world into thinking that we are terrorists who kill civilians. But we always say that we are freedom fighters defending our right to live in peace on our land. I was born in Palestine, and so was my father. All my forefathers were born in Palestine. Everyone knows that Rabin was not born in Palestine. But he uses all the tools of persecution, oppression, and terrorism to uproot us from our own land so that he and the immigrants who come from overseas can live in Palestine. The Zionist movement tells the immigrants

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that this is the promised land, the land of peace, to make them leave their secure places and come to live in the inferno that is Palestine.

They say we are terrorists because we are fighting for all Palestine. Rabin also wants all Palestine. Why is Rabin not called a terrorist? [Likud leader] Netanyahu says daily that he wants all Palestine and that he seeks to torpedo the Oslo Accord. Why, therefore, is he not called a terrorist? Why does Clinton come to Israel and meet Netanyahu, who keeps saying that he wants to torpedo the Oslo Accord and that he wants all Palestine? Clinton meets with Netanyahu as if he is a head of state.

Based on our rights to lead a dignified life, we say that we reject this humiliating accord that makes us lose everything. Why does the world use a policy of double standards? Civilians are the majority of our victims, while we always tend to attack military targets. Why are they not called terrorists? What have we done to the United States and the West to be called terrorists? Have we killed an American? Have we killed a European citizen? Israel's leaders were once wanted as terrorists. Has the world forgotten when Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' held up a photograph of Shamir during the Madrid conference showing that Shamir was wanted by the United Kingdom for his military operations against Britain? These are the terrorists. But we always attack military targets and soldiers.

We recently killed Israeli soldiers who were ready to reinforce military bases in south Lebanon to attack the sons of our people and nation. The West must wake up and stop calling us terrorists. The West must characterize Rabin as the real terrorist, because he always talks about deportation and crime. Those who give funds to settlers to play havoc in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the real terrorists. What do you call the extensive settlements in the West Bank? Israeli settlers kill Palestinians and are detained for five or 10 days. We spend the prime of our lives in prison and then get deported from our homeland. Who is the terrorist? Is it the settlers or is it those who are defending their rights? I urge the intellectuals in the West to collectively define the concept of real terrorism. We neither invaded them nor occupied their land. We are only fighting them in our homeland. But they are attacking us everywhere. We are the victims and they are the terrorists.

[Jamalu] You previously mentioned the Oslo Accord. Has anything new emerged concerning this issue?

[Al-Shaqaqi] The Oslo Accord is dead. The dialogue now is focusing on Israel's security, not on any other issues. The [Palestinian] Authority's task has become clear—protecting Israel.

Paper Publishes PA 'Plan' To 'Weaken' Hamas

JN1402205095 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 7-13 Feb 95 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, exclusive to AL-SABIL—Palestinian sources in Gaza have given AL-SABIL a document prepared by the limited self-rule authority to confront and weaken the Hamas Movement and undermine its patriotic and jihadist principles. The document is within the series of concessions and trusteeship to the Zionist enemy.

It is to be noted that this scheme is strikingly similar to the schemes by the Arab regimes to confront the Islamic movement.

The following is the text of the document:

I. The roots of the religious fundamentalist phenomenon:

The phenomenon is complicated and needs an in-depth study to understand its roots and characteristics. However, given the nature of this paper, we will present some conclusions that are taken out of context, but in a future paper we will present and explain the background and facts to support our conclusions:

1. The religious revival—fundamentalist—phenomenon is a world phenomenon conceived as a result of intellectual hollowness, psychological vacuum, the deterioration of the present, and the failure of the other totalitarian theories.

2. This phenomenon is connected with definite circumstances. It was not born in a certain stage in history and is rather linked to two primary factors: the miserable economic and social reality and the desire for change on the popular level on the one hand, and the internal and external patterns of policies and practices of authorities and fundamentalists on the other.

3. In its present shape and content, this phenomenon has no future because it is an ancestral [salafiyah] movement, seeking to restore a previous model in history, which is definitely an impossible task.

4. Within the Arab framework, this phenomenon has an additional dimension related to religion and its special concept in our Arab history, being the only way to salvation in accordance with the saying that what reformed this nation in the beginning is the only thing that will reform it in the end.

5. Within the Palestinian context, the phenomenon is characterized by the following:

A. The political and ideological expressions of this phenomenon are not Palestinian in origin . Its ideological and political roots were created outside the Palestinian context.

B. The Palestinianization of the political expression of this phenomenon and changing "the Muslim Brotherhood" into "Hamas" were based on the changes in facts and not through an intentional change in the primary political methods.

C. The history of this phenomenon in terms of its relations with the PLO indicates that it was used as a tool of direct mobilization against Palestinian nationalism.

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D. This phenomenon has extensions, interconnections, and alliances transcending the Palestinian arena.

E. Despite its popular base, the phenomenon has its basic alliances from the traditional sectors with clear connections to some Arab states.

6. The fundamentalist phenomena in general derive their mobilization ability by relying on ideologies with popular nature—Islam. There are double standards which are apparent from differences between words and deeds. There is political opportunism and a dichotomy between the summit and the base, not only in terms of the usual decisionmaking but in the substance of the political concepts, which means that it is a major case of double standard approach. The people are being mobilized for a program which is totally different from the one along which the leadership is moving.

II. General aims:

The Hamas Movement exists as a political force. Irrespective of its origin, line, leadership, alliances, links, and penetrations, it must be dealt with in a manner allowing for its inclusion in the political process, enlarge its political activity, reduce and annihilate its resistance and military action against Israel in accordance with the rules of the game as laid down by us. This will ensure cutting external links and exposing the internal schizophrenia and double standards in political and information approaches through a plan aimed at dealing with the phenomenon and tackling its political ideologies.

III. Elements of the Plan:

The process of dealing with this phenomenon is more like drying up a swamp. Therefore, incoming water must be cut off or reduced, and the stagnant water must be drained. The proposed plan is based on three pillars: sociopolitical, economic, security.

1. The sociopolitical pillar:

A. The preacher and political media:

i. Working to generalize and consolidate the concepts of democracy, freedom, and each party's right to express itself. This will break the unilateral monopoly on truth.

ii. Working to separate the various levels of political action and concentrating on what is more important and necessary at each stage.

iii. Working to highlight the achievements of the nationalist action.

iv. Moving before others to expose administrative corruption to prevent it from turning into propaganda material for use by political antagonists.

v. Highlighting the contradiction in Hamas' political approach. This would be by highlighting the contradictions in this approach and the gap between its words and deeds. This would also be by highlighting Hamas' relations and links with parties hostile to the Palestinian nationalist movement.

vi. Highlighting the unsuccessful experiences of religious movements—Afghanistan, for example—to assert that Hamas is nothing but a trend similar to rival trends struggling for power.

vii. Accusing them of practicing violence against our people and targeting innocent people, and highlighting the negative consequences of domestic violence since it exhausts the society and does not achieve the objectives it seeks to achieve.

viii. The question "Where have those been throughout the past stage of occupation?" should be highlighted.

B. On the role of religion:

This issue requires special treatment. Action in this regard must be multipronged:

i. A line should be drawn between Islam as the religion of the majority and the movements that adopt Islam. Here, it should be emphasized that there are numerous Islamic movements and trends.

ii. A line should be drawn between Islam as a slogan and Hamas as a political movement which should have a program. Therefore, it must be stressed that the idea of raising Islam as a slogan is not enough. It should also be highlighted that Hamas does not have a program.

iii. Ideas of Islamic orientation that emphasize the need for ijtihad [working out a solution to a difficult case of current interest by means of reason and analogy to the Koran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings] should be adopted and encouraged. Despite the expected emotional reaction at the beginning, calls for ijtihad must be adopted and supported in the various aspects of Islamic thought.

iv. The fact that there exists more than one force claiming to adopt Islam should be highlighted. Consequently, their credibility can be doubted against the backdrop of their failure to merge under Islam. In addition, this pluralism can be used to emphasize the idea that there is more than one understanding of religion.

v. All that would break the mechanical relationship between Islam as a religion and the movements as political forces should be highlighted. It is noteworthy that those movements should be referred to as "religious" rather than fundamentalist or Islamic forces, trends, or movements, because the essence of their thought is based on a specific understanding of religion.

vi. The idea that posing as an Islamist is not enough to make certain political forces clean and chaste should be emphasized. Therefore, all that would contradict the people's image of Islam as compared to the practices of those forces, leaders, and even ordinary members should be highlighted.

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vii. One should not be involved in a competition with those forces in adopting Islam, especially through the practices officially followed by some Arab regimes, such as relaying live the Friday prayers. Such practices support the religious forces ideologically, but do not help the authority politically.

C. Regarding the mosque's role:

The mosque is the basic pillar of work for all religious forces. It is also their major channel of propaganda and mobilization. Hence, work should be carried out toward one of two solutions: Either to isolate the mosque from political action and remove Hamas and others from it—which, however, is impossible due to the religious nature of this issue—or to enter, along with Hamas, and even precede Hamas, into the mosque in the latter's capacity as a tool for action on the political, propaganda, and mobilization levels. Within this context, the following points can be focused on:

i. Ending the monopolization of mosques requires encouraging the believers affiliated with all political forces to use the mosques as arenas for political propaganda by meeting with the worshipers on various days and by encouraging those capable of delivering speeches to give the Friday sermons and pursue political propaganda, exactly as Hamas does.

ii. Working on use of mosques by all political forces as arenas for mass meetings and political action, especially since many places lack suitable halls for this purpose. Such a practice will entrench the conviction that the mosque is not dedicated only for Hamas, the [Islamic] Jihad, or the al-Tahrir [Liberation] Party but for all believers regardless of their political spectrum. Consequently, any political spectrum is not the antithesis of faith, so the believers will not be grouped together in one political spectrum.

iii. Encouraging the young believers from various political forces to take charge of mosque affairs such as the imam's duties, the library, and the Koran teaching sections.

These points will prompt the religious forces to reach the conclusion that they cannot monopolize the mosque. Consequently, they will either accept isolating the mosque from political action—which will be an important achievement if it happens—or accept and acknowledge the continuation of the situation, and, thus, accept an important result; namely, that they cannot monopolize Islam and its religious institutions.

2. The Economic Pillar:

Despite the tremendous propaganda surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood's activity in general, their work mainly focuses on a three-dimensional economic structure:

—The alms committees, which are a basic source for support and funding.

—The economic institutions they own, which employ a large number of Brotherhood supporters.

—Finally, the undeclared alliance between the Brotherhood and an important part of the capitalist class, particularly the merchants. This alliance provides the grounds for a close relationship and mutual benefits.

Thus, any confrontation [with Hamas] must disconnect the ties among these various links. As noted earlier, there is a close relationship between fundamentalism in general and poverty and social misery. Accordingly, the elements of the economic pillar can be summed up as follows:

A. Economic development: With or without the fundamentalist phenomenon, economic development remains a necessity for life and existence. Within this context, economic prosperity, and consequently raising the standard of living and eliminating unemployment, will remove a basic and vital source of misery. Without going into details, the development plan must focus on promoting the human factor and on projects which have a social dimension and which will develop people's lifestyle.

B. Breaking the monopoly of alms tax committees:

The alms tax committees represent a collective and popular action and are the main instrument for financing the Muslim Brotherhood's activities. Therefore, depriving them of the chance to continue obtaining finance and using it to recruit new supporters requires embarking on some or all of the following measures:

i. Making the alms tax committees fully governmental and official committees. In this case, the citizens' confidence in these committees will be reduced and they will look for other popular alternatives.

ii. The committees' activities should be declared and made known to all. This will allow various social and political forces to participate in them and supervise their actvities.

iii. To work out an accurate auditing system for the alms tax committees as well as declared and clear standards for beneficiaries. This will show that these standards are not political standards, and will expose any signs of corruption in the committees and make the people more aware while dealing with them.

C. Economic establishments:

It is not illegal for the political forces to have their establishments, but these establishments should be closely monitored, and they should extend services to the society more than to the party to which they belong. Employment in these establishments should be based on efficiency and experience. This requires that malfunction in these establishments be exposed and that they be put under the direct supervision of the government.

Concerning the alliance between part of the capitalist class—usually the traders—and the Brotherhood, the basis

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of such an alliance is that traders are mostly social conservatives. Therefore, political forces should be created to take care of this class, absorb its members, and represent its socio-economic trends more than the Brotherhood.

3. Security pillar:

A. To work internally to besiege the individuals and leaderships that are hostile to the National Authority and strengthen the position of the leaderships that have a moderate position toward the Authority and which agree to participate in the political process.

B. To restrict the security dealing to the narrowest limits. This means weakening the image that Hamas seeks to entrench, which is that it is the main opposition force and the available alternative. This is because putting it in the limelight greatly serves its interest.

C. To work for separating Hamas' main body from its sympathetic and supportive environment. This means that pressure should not be employed on the environment but concentration should be on the main body.

D. To work out a long-term and radical security plan, and not to seek quick premature results, because a short-term plan, as many experiments of some countries showed, has adverse results.

E. To penetrate their ranks and use these penetrations at the appropriate time.

F. To work for knowing and defining Hamas' military organ, 'Izz- al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, and its security organ, and to work out an integrated plan to weaken them and deal with them in the appropriate manner. All this should be done in total secrecy, using a calm and patient approach.

G. Taking the initiative and defining the principles of work on the security level is a basic condition for success, because leaving the initiative for them will allow them to move from one arena to another.

In conclusion, these are general headlines that touched on the most important aspects of the subject. It should be emphasized that the isolation [of Hamas], generalization [not further specified], and sincerity in dealing with this subject will allow us to succeed.

Hamas Official Proposes Condition for Peace

NC1502192695 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, changed its tone today. It disclosed to the MBC a new concept providing for an Israeli withdrawal and a phased international supervision as a way to establish peace. Our correspondent Mahir al-Shalabi reports:

[Begin al-Shalabi recording] Shaykh Jamil al-Hamami, one of the Hamas leaders, in an exclusive interview with MBC, and in response to a question on the conditions needed to promote the peace process, called for an unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the West Bank, including Jerusalem, in a clear sign of a change in Hamas' policy on a solution in the region:

[Al-Hamami] [in progress] ...immediate withdrawal as a temporary, phased, and partial solution, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and keeping the area under international supervision until the Palestinians can hold free and genuine elections to elect their representatives. The Palestinian people will then live with the results of their choice and elections.

[Al-Shalabi] Can we say that your statement is a proposal?

[Al-Hamami] I propose what I believe in, and I think that at this particular time this proposal is appropriate for the Palestinian people. I am not concerned whether Israel agrees or not. Israel will not agree to anything because Israel... [sentence incomplete as heard]

[Al-Shalabi] Al-Hamami has proposed that the Palestinian delegation withdraw from the negotiations because the Oslo Agreement will lead nowhere. [passage omitted] [end recording]

'Arafat To Attend Mideast Symposium in Paris

LD1502114895 Paris France-Info Radio in French 1100 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat will be in Paris next weekend [18, 19 February]. The PLO leader is to take part in a symposium on the future of the Middle East together with the Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa.

On this occasion, 'Arafat intends to meet President Mitterrand and the Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

Arrest of Human Rights Lawyer Provokes Reaction

NC1502172095 Paris AFP in English 1530 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Report by Sakher Abu Eloun]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Feb 15 (AFP)—Palestinian police on Wednesday [15 February] detained for 16 hours the leading human rights lawyer in the Gaza Strip who has repeatedly criticized the self-rule authority of PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat.

"I have not been given an explanation," said Raji al-Surani, 42-year-old director of the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law.

He was freed after a 90-minute interview by Attorney General Khalid al-Qidrah.

"He was sent home after clarification," on a statement by the centre criticizing 'Arafat's decision last week to set up a state security court, al-Qidrah said.

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"He was not arrested in the first place," he claimed. The centre's statement, which called for the court to be scrapped, was considered "provocation," he said.

"It was made clear that he (al-Surani) did not mean anything by it, and it's over now. We do not interfere in freedom of expression, unless we suspect there is a violation of the law," al-Qidrah said.

Al-Surani gave a different version. "There was no investigation. I made it clear that the communique was objective and part of our routine work on human rights.

"There was nothing to talk about, the communique was referred to but in my opinion there was no subject, and then they told me the issue was closed."

al-Surani's wife Amal told how plainclothes police took him from their Gaza City home after midnight. "They just said he had to go and that it was urgent orders from high up," she said.

After he was hauled off, the centre repeated its call to scrap the military security court, against which there will be no appeal, and told the authority to stop making arrests without due process.

"The arrest of a prominent human rights lawyer confirms the dangerous state which the protection of human rights has now reached in the Palestinian autonomous areas," said the centre, an affiliate of the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists.

It was set up in 1985 by four lawyers to monitor abuses of human rights by the Israeli occupation forces, but began monitoring the Palestinian self-rule authority after it took charge last May.

al-Surani, jailed several times by the Israelis, has been director since 1991.

[In a related report, Paris AFP in English at 1628 GMT on 15 February adds the following:

["The Palestinian supreme court has asked the attorney general to explain the detention of a prominent Islamic Jihad leader held since the group killed more than 20 Israelis last month, the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law said Wednesday. In its first ruling of the kind, the court gave al-Qidrah's office eight days to give reasons for detaining [no first name as received] Shami. Shami was arrested on January 24 in a crackdown by Palestinian police, two days after a double suicide bombing killed 21 people near the Israeli resort of Netanya. His group claimed responsibility for the attack and the two suicide bombers were from Gaza. About 30 members of the group have been detained, according to Palestinian officials.

["Like Shami, most of the detainees say they are political members of the group and not in contact with its armed wing. Shami's wife said his brother had been allowed to see the Islamic Jihad leader only once since the arrest. She tried to visit him on Friday but was not allowed, nor have lawyers with the human rights centre."]

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Algeria

Government Calls For 1-Hour Suspension of Studies

LD1502141795 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Before we start the international news, we have received a statement from the National Education Ministry.

Out of the education community's eagerness to keep the schools away from the political and partisan conflicts and to safeguard the sanctity of schools—which remain a place to promote knowledge, bring up generations, and lay the foundations for their education—and in response to the concerns of the students and their parents, the National Education Ministry calls for the suspension of study in all educational institutes on 16 Ramadan 1405 AH, corresponding to 16 February 1995, from 0900 to 1000 as a denunciation of the repeated attacks and sabotage that affect lives and schools.

Teachers, Berber Group March in Tizi Ouzou

LD1502222095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Berber 1830 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Still in the education sector, following the measures taken recently by the education minister concerning the teachers who are boycotting schools, the Autonomous Trade Union of Education and Training Workers, staged a march in Tizi Ouzou today in which it expressed its opposition to these measures. Here is a report from Khaled:

[Khaled] This march in which the Berber Cultural Movement and the association of the parents of school pupils participated was organized to protest against the 60 percent reduction in the salaries of teachers. The demonstrators also rejected the training seminar organized by the Tizi Ouzou academy and expressed their support to the Tamazight [Berber] language issue.

May I remind you that the National Federation of Education Workers refused to take part in this march. Its leaders said that the UGTA [Algerian General Workers Union] was determined to solve the problem with the government.

Women's Group Leader Assassinated in Tizi Ouzou

LD1502224795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 2200 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We have also received news of the assassination of Nabila Djahine, only 35 years old, and president of the association Thighri-Net-Nettouth, which means: Women's Outcry. She was killed in the center of Tizi Ouzou today by two terrorists.

She will be buried tomorrow at Sidi Mohamed Amokrane Cemetery, in the town of Bejaia.

Former Prime Minister on Crisis, French Role

MM1502161095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Feb 95 p 4

[Interview with former Prime Minister Abdelhamid Brahimi by Kamil al-Tawil in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Tawil] How do you expect the Algerian situation to develop in the wake of the failure of all dialogue efforts?

[Brahimi] Actually, there has been no attempt to hold a serious in-depth dialogue between the current regime and the credible and really influential parties in Algeria. The present situation is very serious. The attitude of the Algerian regime has led the country to a dead end and to more decay and deterioration in all fields. The regime itself is now completely isolated internally and externally. That regime has not put forward any economic or political programs since 1992. It is conducting affairs more or less one day at a time.

[Al-Tawil] The situation has reached a dead end as you say. What next?

[Brahimi] The only solution that would resolve the crisis is national dialogue and reconciliation. I believe that there is no alternative to dialogue despite the strong statements made by the current Algerian authorities against the Rome conference. I say that any stand against national dialogue and reconciliation is a stand against the country's higher interests.

I believe, in this connection, that the national covenant produced by the Rome conference constitutes an appropriate basis for dialogue with the regime to stop the bloodshed and restore democracy. [passage omitted]

[Al-Tawil] Is there any possibility of the opposition choosing a candidate to represent it in the coming presidential elections?

[Brahimi] Presidential elections are premature. Why were the legislative elections canceled in 1991 after the first round, won by the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]? Why was the people's choice not accepted, bearing in mind that those who canceled the 1991 elections are the same people now preparing to hold presidential elections? Are these elections meant to give President Zeroual the powers of a constitutionally elected president? If so, the president now has much greater powers than an elected president would have because the latter would be restricted by the powers of the institutions. Dialogue, introduction of calming measures, release of prisoners including the FIS leaders, closure of the desert detention camps, and restoration of the FIS' legitimacy as a political party are all steps which the current president can take if he wanted. The vast majority of the Algerian people believe in dialogue and reconciliation and want such measures.

If elections are to take place, they must be a result of dialogue and should come after certain measures are

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taken to clear the atmosphere. There can be no presidential or legislative elections in the current Algerian atmosphere. That would be impossible. [passage omitted]

[Al-Tawil] Do you believe that the FIS has made all the contributions it could for the settlement of the crisis?

[Brahimi] I am not an FIS member and, therefore, cannot speak on its behalf, but the FIS cannot be blamed if no solution is achieved. Its leaders and fighters are in prison. There has been no real dialogue between it and the regime nor between the latter and the other parties. The dialogue, which President Zeroual, in his speech on the eve of the revolution anniversary celebrations, said had failed, never took place. There were contacts but no dialogue. The authorities sent some generals to the [FIS] shaykhs and asked them to call a halt to violence. Is that dialogue? There are two parties to the violence in the country. The regime started the violence even before the cancellation of the elections. Then there was the reaction to the regime's violence after the military coup and the cancellation of the legislative elections. The violence taking place in Algeria cannot be called terrorism. It is political violence and reaction to political decisions which ran contrary to the people's will and the country's constitution and laws.

[Al-Tawil] Are we to interpret your words as a justification for the many acts of violence taking place in Algeria, such as the car bomb in the capital?

[Brahimi] I am not justifying anything. I am just saying that a politician should take into consideration the political reality as it is not as he wishes it to be. If it were up to me, I do not believe that we would have reached this situation. What I am saying is that the acts of violence which occur cannot be called terrorism. They are a reaction and acts of resistance against an unjust and corrupt political regime.

[Al-Tawil] What about certain acts which...

[Brahimi] There are obvious things on which there can be no disagreement, such as the question of the killing of children, women, and old people, and the killing of innocent people in the streets. Is it conceivable that any sensible and sincere Algerian would accept such acts. The FIS has itself said that it had nothing to do with such acts.

[Al-Tawil] What do you think of the demonstrations which come out in Algerian areas in support of the regime?

[Brahimi] They are rigged marches. They bring people in trucks and buses from neighboring areas. It is ridiculous and sad at the same time. They have set us back 20 years.

[Al-Tawil] The regime, reacting to the opposition's criticism, said that it had taken numerous measures to promote a solution, such as investigation of terrorist crimes. President Zeroual told the parties: Show me any evidence that the security forces are commiting acts of killing and then blaming the Islamists for them.

[Brahimi] The regime is currently killing hundreds of people in acts of reprisal. The opposition parties have called for the formation of a national committee to investigate the crimes but the head of state rejected that. We have definite information that groups armed by the regime carry out acts of murder and terrorism against citizens, intellectuals, and officials just on the suspicion that they sympathize with the Islamic movement.

[Al-Tawil] Do you intend to participate in any new conference of opposition parties?

[Brahimi] I did receive two invitations to the two Rome conferences but private circumstances prevented me from attending. But I agree with and support the conclusions of the Rome conferees and I support everything in the national covenant without reservation.

[Al-Tawil] Do you see any change in France's position on the Algerian crisis after President Mitterrand's initiative?

[Brahimi] The Mitterrand initiative was just a proposal as he himself said, but we should deeply analyze its Machiavellian nature. Mitterrand is a professional politician. To understand his proposal, an analyst should go back in time a little. I will not go back to the war of liberation. I will just go back to the beginning of the nineties. It is known that Larabi Belkhayr visited Paris in June 1991 where the initiative to arrest Shaykhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj was made at the Elysee Palace in the same month. That is the truth and I am talking about it officially for the first time. That French interference was not the first. After the FIS victory in the 1990 municipal elections, a meeting was held at the office of Larabi Belkhayr's office at the presidency. Four other generals attended. The conferees said that Islamic rule in Algeria could not be accepted at all, not even if the country drowned in blood. That is on record and history will judge it.

The pressure of these generals continued throughout 1991, leading to the postponement of the legislative elections three times. All these were maneuvers by France through its elements in Algeria. [passage omitted] Mitterrand is not innocent of what happened from the beginning of the nineties up to the coup itself in January 1992.

[Al-Tawil] Are you accusing Mitterrand of having been behind the coup?

[Brahimi] Larabi Belkhayr and some of the generals now at the head of the Algerian regime are French agents.

[Al-Tawil] Agents?

[Brahimi] Yes, agents. They were officers in the French Army during the liberation war.

[Al-Tawil] What evidence do you have of French complicity in what is going on?

[Brahimi] Look at France's attitude since the coup. It has provided economic, financial, political, diplomatic, and

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military support for the current regime, with the direct supervision of Mitterrand. [passage omitted]

[Al-Tawil] How will the Mitterrand initiative affect French-Algerian relations?

[Brahimi] These relations cannot be affected at all. Would anyone cut off his supply line? The Algerian regime cannot possibly do anything that would cut off its supply line which is France. France will continue to provide what it calls "aid" for Algeria but that is not aid really. France is giving Algeria loans to purchase French equipment and products which enhance the French economic. The products are sold to Algeria at prices 30 or 40 percent higher than the international market price. France is drinking the blood of the Algerians. It despises them. [passage omitted]

Radio: 'Nearly 3,000 Acts of Sabotage' in '94

LD1502142795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Enterprises and factories ransacked and destroyed, schools set on fire and closed—there is nothing new about this. By their acts of sabotage the terrorists are draining the national economy. There were nearly 3,000 acts of sabotage for the year 1994, with more than 500 schools destroyed and 80 percent of them rebuilt. The damage is huge, and estimated at nearly 90 billion [currency not specified]. [passage omitted]

Contradictory Versions of Tunisia Border Incident

LD1502145295 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been an incident on the Algerian—Tunisian border, with the death last week of several gendarmes from Tunisia. There they are called National Guards. Were Algerians involved in the affair, and which ones? Was it political or was in an accident? Chantal Lorho:

[Lorho] According to information gathered from well-informed sources in Tunisia on 11 February, a commando burst into the tourist village of Tamerza [in southern Tunisia], two kilometers from the Algerian border just at Iftar, the moment when the Ramadan fast is broken. So the village was deserted; the members of the armed group attacked the office of the National Guard—the Tunisian equivalent of the gendarmerie, as you said. They cut the throats of six men and seized their weapons and ammunition before fleeing back to Algerian territory.

For the moment it is impossible to tell if it was a GIA [Armed Islamic Group] commando, as LIBERATION says this morning. In any case, the version that we have told you has been denied by the ATCE, the Tunisian Foreign Communications Agency, which says it was simply a road accident. The landrover of the six national guards allegedly fell into a ravine. They say two of the guards were killed and the four others injured. This is an attempt to make people believe in a GIA attack to harm us and damage our tourism, says the ATCE.

'Normal' Activity Resumes at Several Ports

LD1502174595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Activity is back to normal at the country's commercial ports today, except the ports of Algiers, the capital and Tenes, where workers and employers' representatives are keeping in touch.

Measures have been taken at the capital's port to enable public and private enterprises to unload cargoes, particularly the perishable ones, by using the enterprises' special methods, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Transport.

Egypt

Officials React to U.S. Human Rights Report

Interior Minister Rejects Report

MM1602112695 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 6

[Interview with Interior Minister Major General Hasan al-Alfi by 'Amr 'Abd -al-Sami' in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Abd-al-Sami'] The U.S. Embassy in Cairo has recently issued a report about the human rights situation in Egypt in 1994. The report, it was noted, was characterized by some sharp words about human rights issues, which it said had suffered large-scale violations. The report, for example, spoke of the effects of the continuation of the state of emergency which, it said, has restricted many of the basic human rights. The report spoke of what it called the involvement of the security forces in a closed ring of violence with terrorist groups and their torturing of the detainees. It also alleged that the government has failed to bring those responsible for this torture to book. What do you say about this report?

[Al-Alfi] When I first looked at the report, I thought it was not new. For I felt I had read such talk before, either in some papers or in the pamphlets of the Egyptian opposition, which sympathizes with the terrorists, or perhaps in some of the reports issued by some human rights organizations which have proven themselves to be clearly biased such as the Middle East Watch organization [as published; presumably meaning Human Rights Watch—Middle East].

This means, in other words, that those who wrote the report of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo have done nothing more than get hold of translations of part of what was published in the opposition press and reports issued by some organizations with dubious aims, copied them and

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filled their reports with them and then used them to claim that there were large-scale violations of human rights in Egypt.

I believe this method has no connection with any fair evaluation of conditions in the field of human rights or for that matter in any other field. For, in this case, one tries to deal with a specific situation, and starts from a preconceived conviction of what he is trying to prove, and consequently he is bound to go beyond all the bounds of fairness and objectivity, and indeed, of reason.

It is not right for anyone who is seeking to prepare a report about human rights in any country to pick the worst, biased stories he can lay his hands on in any paper or pamphlet which would give him a very gloomy picture and which he then presents as being the true picture of the conditions of human rights in this country.

I would say that if I were to tackle the question of human rights in the United States, using this same biased method, which is void of all fairness and objectivity, I would come out with a picture that is not much different from the one drawn by the report of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

If I were to rely on the publications and pamphlets issued by the various radical organizations, societies, and leagues in the various parts of the United States about the conditions of blacks and women and so on, I would come out with a picture that is totally different from the picture we know of the United States. But that picture would be a false one or at least exaggerated and unfair, just like the picture drawn by the report of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

What I mean is that it not difficult to draw false pictures in pursuit of certain objectives. I do not believe it is in the interest of the United States to draw false pictures about the situation in Egypt or to lend support to those who aim at creating such a false picture.

Hence my surprise upon reading the U.S. Embassy's report. I wish to put this question to those who wrote the report: It is evident that you have relied on what was published in some Egyptian opposition papers that have sympathy, in one form or another, with the terrorist groups. This means that you have personally read these and other newspapers and thus saw for yourselves the extent of the freedom these papers enjoy. Does not this fact make you think of the significance of the contradiction between this freedom and the picture drawn by these free papers about the state of human rights in Egypt?

I believe that had those who prepared this biased report issued by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo viewed things through this perspective and tried to find an objective answer to my question, they would have reconsidered much of what they wrote in their report and they would have viewed matters with a different eye than the one that influenced their report. Perhaps if they were to do so, their next report would be fairer, or at least less biased, less unfair and less misleading.

We realize that we work for the sake of God and the homeland, and consequently we are not affected by such misleading reports and we are not prepared to retreat from confronting terrorism with the utmost decisiveness within the framework drawn by the law. Furthermore, we are able at all times to refute all the misleading claims and false reports that are disseminated in this regard. This has helped us greatly in controlling terrorism and achieving one success after another with a view to eradicating it completely, God willing. ['Abd-al-Sami'] The Middle East Watch organization which deals with human rights in the Middle East issued a report on 31 January 1995 in which it accused the Egyptian security authorities of what it called detaining relatives of absconding members of the Islamist groups as hostages to force these members to surrender themselves to the authorities. The report also alleged that among those detained there were "women who were being subjected to humiliating sexual abuses as a means to bring pressure to bear on the absconding members." Is there any basis for this allegation?

[Al-Alfi] I am surprised at the reports issued by the Middle East Watch organization. If we were to compare its reports with those issued by other international human rights organizations, we would notice that the Middle East Watch organization specifically is bent on harming Egypt, a fact which casts doubt -on its true intentions and affiliations.

For this organization levels charges without any support, indeed, it admits that it possesses no proofs. It has illicitly admitted this again in the report you have spoken of.

It said: "Over a period of three years, the Organization has found it difficult to document the cases of the detention of hostages." It tried to justify this by claiming that it was due to the prevalence of a state of fear that make families that suffer any ill-treatment keep quite. It attributed this allegation to "an Asyut lawyers" in an ambiguous manner that lacks all credibility.

Even if we were to assume that the Organization was not inventing such claims with premeditated ill intent, is it right for a respectable human rights organization to base its reports on a statement by a person it described as "knowledgeable about such cases," and this is all the qualifications he possesses, and say that "members of the affected families would not come forward to testify out of fear."

Does this Organization not care about its reputation and credibility?

My advice to this organization and other organizations that follow its course is to try to verify the facts, adhere to objectivity, listen to all sides and check their sources so that their role would not be in the end one of support for violence and terrorism and collusion with the most abominable violations of human rights that are committed by these terrorist organizations.

I have repeatedly affirmed, and still do, that the security authorities operate within the framework of the law and

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that they adhere to the law. They do not arrest anyone unless his activities contravene the law. Hence all those remanded have been involved in violations, contraventions, and acts of terrorism. Any excesses in the enforcement of the law are never tolerated and are immediately investigated.

We tackle violations of human rights in accordance with the law. We would not get carried away into acts that contravene the law however horrible the crimes committed by the terrorists. We will continue to abide by this in all circumstances.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Despite your repeated affirmations of the Ministry of the Interior's respect for human rights in all circumstances, including those dealing with acts of terrorism, which constitute the most dangerous violation of human rights, it is often stated in the reports of the organizations that champion the cause of human rights that there have been cases of violation of these rights. What is the truth about this?

[Al-Alfi] We understand human rights, in accordance with the international charters and religious principles, to be the rights of every citizen to live an honorable life, to have his freedom, honor and property preserved, and to enjoy equality before the law and equality of opportunity. Hence we cannot understand how human rights can turn into a tool for protecting terrorists and murderers and siding with groups that practice terrorism openly in broad daylight and violate the rights of the Egyptian human being.

Yet despite all that, we in the Ministry of the Interior take great care to insure that our commitment to protect the citizens from terrorism does not lead to any excesses. It is a fact known to all that Egypt has an independent and just judiciary, that all acts of excessiveness are brought up before it, and that there is no interference in the judiciary's affairs.

['Abd-al-Sami'] There is more than one organization in Egypt championing the cause of human rights, such as the Arab Human Rights Organization and the branch of Amnesty International. How do you see these organizations' responses to the Ministry of the Interior's clarifications and statements?

[Al-Alfi] Their responses are generally limited but not totally nonexistent. For it is difficult for any organization that raises the slogan of human rights, rightly or falsely, to ignore completely clarifications that are supported by strong proofs that are not easy to refute because they are based on facts.

For example, the Egyptian Human Rights Organization found it necessary to admit in its 1993 report that terrorist groups bear the greater share of responsibility for the acts of murder and physical liquidation, whereas in the past it had refused to accept this fact.

But the responses are usually partial or limited and do not go to the extent of these organizations correcting themselves by themselves or returning to the truth. So when the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, for example, admitted the terrorists' responsibility for the violation of human rights, its admission would get lost in the flood of its attacks against the Egyptian authorities in that same report of 1993. Its concern for the effect of terrorism on human rights occupied only a small space compared to the space accorded to its campaign against the authorities. Indeed, it remained unable to properly describe the violations suffered by the Egyptian people at the hands of the terrorists, namely that they were "acts of terrorism," except in rare cases. It usually uses such expressions as "acts of violence" and fails to call the groups that carry such acts "terrorist groups." It often calls them "Islamist groups belonging to the political Islamist current."

It seems that these organizations decline to admit that they were mistaken or rash or that their judgements had been exaggerated, apparently because they try to protect their image, particularly abroad, before the organizations that raise the slogan of human rights in the West. Perhaps they think that their response to the clarifications might have a negative effect on their credibility, despite the fact they would become more credible if they were to verify matters well before issuing their reports and if they were to admit that they had been rash in their evaluations.

What is more important for them for gaining credibility in the first place is that they should not mix human rights activities with political action. Human rights activities demand some sort of detachment, objectivity, and impartiality. And these are matters which the organizations dealing with human rights cannot possess if they had political aims in the first place.

['Abd-al-Sami'] It is noted that most of those dominating the councils of the human rights organizations in Egypt were leftists and Nasirites, but they champion the causes of defending extremist religious groups. How do you explain this contradiction?

[Al-Alfi] This state of affairs is an extension of what I have just said about the mixing human rights and political action. This mixing is the death [Maqtal] of human rights activities. Though there is a thin line between the two fields, it is extremely important—indeed, it is the vital criterion of the credibility and seriousness of the human rights work. In the absence of this line those involved in this activity become political groups that raise human rights slogans as a cover for their inability to get down to the political arena, which rejects them and so they seek another way to enter it.

In such a case, the human rights slogans become a mere pretext used by some to attack their own governments, distort the image of their country and harm it abroad by resorting to these slogans, even if that meant the defending of terrorists who violate human rights in such barbaric manner that has no parallel.

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['Abd-al-Sami'] Do you have any specific examples which prove that some of the quarters that champion human rights are bent on distorting Egypt's image and harming it abroad?

[Al-Alfi] Naturally there are numerous examples, but I will mention two of them. When the Egyptian Government submitted its second periodic report to the UN Human Rights Committee in July 1993, in accordance with the International Charter of Civil and Political rights, the Egyptian Human Rights Organization sent a report to the aforementioned Committee alleging that Egypt was not complying with the provisions of the International Charter.

The same thing happened in November when Egypt submitted its report to the UN Committee for Combatting Torture [as published] in accordance with the provisions of the international agreement on the combat of torture and other kinds of inhumane and harsh treatment, which Egypt endorsed in 1986. This agreement asks the member countries to submit a report every four years on the new measures it has taken to affirm its respect for the provisions of the agreement. Yet the same organization [the Egyptian Human Rights Organization] rushed again to send a report to the aforementioned Committee alleging that torture was rife in Egypt.

I know well that human rights organizations which have no political objectives do not do such a thing in any country whtsoever, because they criticize their governments inside, not outside, their countries when there is something to criticize.

But the behavior of the aforementioned organization bears none of the attributes of human rights and for that matter of the political opposition forces which know that opposition should be practised inside the country and not outside it. I fear that their aim might be to please certain forces abroad to secure their support under the slogan of human rights; otherwise it is incomprehensible how champions of human rights could defend those who violate human rights by the most barbaric methods through their terrorist actions, if they really seek to defend human rights. We cannot understand how leftists can devote themselves to serving religious extremist groups, if their aim is political action alone. Those who act in this way cannot be champions of human rights but people who latch onto human rights slogans.

['Abd-al-Sami'] But how can one explain the conflicts that exist between two groups belonging to the Egyptian Human Rights Organization and which led to a heated battle of charges and countercharges?

[Al-Alfi] These conflicts provide irrefutable proof that the matter is not one of human rights. For how can there be any conflict between two groups working in the field of human rights, which is based now to a great extent on a stable foundation.

When human rights are used as a cover only, those latching onto them are bound to return to their roots at some time, and thus split over political positions or over the funds that they receive from abroad or even from inside the country.

The aforementioned organization has been dominated by a group of communists with some Nasirite grafting at the beginning against whom a group of Nasirites eventally turned. The growth of funding resources have led to the escalation of the conflict and the division. This talk is neither mine nor that of the reports of the security departments. For this is something we have known all along through the mutual battles which flared up before and during the meeting of the fifth general assembly of this organization, which was held in January 1994 at the premises of the Press Syndicate. The altercations included accusations of treason, acting as agents, buying supporters, robbery, and swindling. Abominable abusive words that are punishable by the law, for which they claim to be working to achieve respect, were used during these exchanges of charges over the funding the organization obtains, and many things that were kept away from the public opinion were also said.

What was surprising also was that when the group that triumphed in the battle and dominated the Organization related what has happened, it did so from its own perspective and expropriated the position taken by the other group, which until the recent past was its partner. This came in the book published by the victors under the title "The Fifth General Assembly: Events and Facts," in which they related matters from their own point of view, ridiculed the position of the other group, and refused to let it express its position by itself, thus violating the freedom of expression which they claim to be defending. The book did not record the events and facts its title purported to be talking about. This is because the recording of these events and facts would only help to widen the scope of the scandal. Thus public opinion was deprived of its right to know the facts, which is the most fundamental human right.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Western human rights organizations show particular interest in the Middle East region and some of them concentrate their activities on this region, such as the Middle East Watch. Every now and then these organizations have issued reports about Egypt. Do you think that their attitude toward human rights is mixed with political considerations as well?

[Al-Alfi] I believe that such mixing exists in the activities of some of them at least. But there is another problem concerning these foreign organizations, namely, the type and the sources of the information they rely upon. For we have noticed that much of what was contained in their reports about Egypt was not precise. We were surprised to see that some of them rely on "information" propagated by terrorist elements that live abroad.

We are surprised by the attitudes of some Western states which permit such elements to live in their countries and to grant political asylum to some of them. Likewise, we are surprised to see human rights organizations relying

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on the reports propagated by these elements. This is not confined to Egypt alone. Other countries in this area have also been complaining of this same thing. This means that the human rights organizations are turning into tools for defending those who violate human rights.

True, the exaggerations by some foreign human rights organizations about Egypt are not many. But still it is the duty of these organizations to verify their facts before saying anything about them. As to their exaggerations about other countries such as Algeria, they have reached a very high degree and have begun to constitute a source of serious harm.

I am saying this because I have read a recent report by the Middle East Watch organization about Algeria. I was astounded by the accusations made against the Algerian authorities. I had to pause in particular at one of these accusations which said that the Algerian authorities' definition of terrorism was so general and ambiguous that it restricts freedom of opinion.

I was surprised to note that what was meant by this was that the Algerian authorities have been punishing what the report called "those who praise or encourage acts of terrorism or those who copy and circulate documents that praise these acts." This, then, is the freedom of expression which such a famous human rights organization is defending: the freedom to praise, encourage and propagate for terrorism, in other words: the freedom to call for murder, which is the ultimate violation of human rights. And this is something we totally reject in whole and in part.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Three American lawyers arrived in Egypt during the Bar Association crisis last May and were received by the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, which arranged a press conference for them. Does the state look with concern over the relation between Egyptian human rights organizations and foreign human rights organizations?

[Al-Alfi] The state in Egypt is not worried by any activity pertaining to human rights whether by Egyptian or by foreign organizations. Indeed, it welcomes such activity and affirms its readiness to cooperate with those carrying the activity but on one condition: that this activity shall be honest and actually devoted to human rights and not a mere cover for a political activity that aims at distorting Egypt's image abroad.

If there are some organizations in Egypt which raise the slogan of human rights while in fact they use these rights as a front for other activities, then their relations with the foreign organizations become a source of harm to Egypt's image. If some of the foreign organizations seem to have dubious objectives, then we would be actutally facing a political game. Then some foreign organizations might seek to get something in return for the funds it provides to some of the Egyptian organizations.

It is known that the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights [as published] in the United States is one of the quarters that finance the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, as it states in its book which it published in 1993 under the title "In Defense of Human Rights." For the book was prefaced with a word of thanks to the financiers which said: "It would not have been possible to publish this book had it not been for the support of the following institutions.... One of the financiers named was the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in the United States, in addition to the Dutch Organization for International Cooperation and the Swiss Fund for non-governmental organizations of human rights.

However, we at the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior welcome any honest activity in the field of human rights because we are anxious to insure respect for these rights and we have nothing to hide. These rights are the rights of our people whose sons in the police forces sacrifice their lives to protect them from terrorism.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Last December the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights issued a report about conditions in the Egyptian Province of Al-Minya under the heading "The Machines of Violence in Egypt," in which it alleged that it sent a team to Malwi town but the security authorities there refused to cooperate with it. Is this true?

[Al-Alfi] There is a general rule applied by all the security officials throughout the Egyptian Republic, which is to welcome cooperation with any organization concerned with human rights. This applies too to the aforementioned organization, despite the fact that the Ministry of the Interior was fully aware of the background of what you have spoken of. But there are also administrative measures which should be complied with in addressing the security officials in regard to cooperation in any field whatsoever.

['Abd-a-Sami'] Some of the human right organisation never stop criticising conditions inside Egyptian prisons despite the Ministry of the Interior's affirmation on more than one occasion of its welcome of anyone who wants to verify the truth about the conditions in the prisons. It was noticed that some of the terrorists in the prisons sent message to these organizations. How far does this agree with the laws and rules in force?

[Al-Alfi] The question of prisons has two sides: The first concerns the good treatment of prisoners—that is, not to expose them to any inhuman treatment and to offer them opportunities to learn starting with combatting illiteracy and ending with their education through providing them with a chance to learn some crafts. In this respect Egyptian prisons are considered to be at the highest international level.

The second side concerns the standard of living of the prisoners in terms of food and clothing and so on. This side is bound to be linked to the standard of living of society. Prisoners cannot live at a higher standard than the minimum standard of living of the honourable Egyptian citizen, otherwise it would be as if we were rewarding the prisoners for their crimes.

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Thus the criterion is the standard of living of society and not the standard of living of prisoners in European countries with high living standards. But I can affirm that the standard of living in Egyptian prisons is very reasonable for a developing country. Any quarter can verify this fact, if it wishes. We are prepared to facilitate its mission with open hearts, so that it can get precise and factual information. But for some quarters to obtain misleading information from terrorist elements and to encourage them to sneak out messages from inside the prisons constitute a violation of the law, whereas human rights provide for respect for the law. Such behavior also seems to be an extension of what I have referred to—the involvement of some human rights organizations in the defense of terrorists who are among the most ferocious and most barbaric violators of human rights.

Official Meets U.S. Diplomat

NC1502134395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1100 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—Ambassador 'Adil al-Safti, assistant foreign minister for international relations, met today with Jeffrey Millington, political adviser at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

Al-Safti said the U.S. Embassy forwarded a clarification on the U.S. State Department's annual report on human rights in the world.

He added that the Embassy's political adviser explained that Egypt was not intended by this report, which deals with human rights in various countries. He said that Malnington promised that the report will take into consideration various viewpoints in the future.

Ambassador al-Safti held a meeting today with the French, German, Spanish, and U.S. ambassadors in Cairo. They discussed issues on the agenda of the human rights committee now meeting in Geneva and ways to coordinate stances on these issues.

Article: Report Has Political Goals

NC1502221695 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 12 Feb 95 p 1

[Article by Jalal Duwaydar: "A Positive and Needed Action To Respond to the Reports of Defamation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We should always have the ability to confront the actions to distort Egypt's image in which, regrettably, some Egyptians take part.

Any impudence or any resort to lies and aspersions to defame Egypt are totally unacceptable because this policy strengthens the belief that what is being said and published is correct when it is not, and because any silence in this case is a sign of consent.

Hence, I salute the stance taken by Interior Minister Hasan al- Alfi, who broke the rules when he replied to the U.S. Department of State's human rights report. He attacked the elements who prepared this report, which they based on only one side's statements and allegations, namely some individuals who are hostile to the state, in addition to what is published in some opposition papers that sympathize with the terrorists.

The interior minister attacked the report for not being objective and stressed that the security organs the report spoke about are capable of refuting all the report's incidents of human rights violations. He stressed that these organs operate within the legal framework and abide by all the guaranteed rights in their confrontation with terrorism and with any attempt to harm the security of citizens and the homeland. The minister said that some of those working in the field of human rights in Egypt are working to satisfy foreign forces in order to obtain the latter's financial and political support.

In the interview published by the London-based AL-HAYAH, the minister called on the human rights organizations to be accurate and honest and to rely on reliable sources that represent all parties.

Reaction to the U.S. State Department's report was not limited to what the interior minister said. The Foreign Ministry organs acted after recently realizing the importance of the principle of not abandoning the stage for hostile trends to practice their deceptions inside and outside the country. On the basis of this new stand, Assistant Foreign Minister 'Adil al-Safti announced that the report contained false information and dealt ambiguously with cases of torture. He stressed that the Egyptian authorities are willing to investigate any incident and to try the culprits. He noted that, according to the Egyptian constitution, the crime of torture has no statute of limitations that lapses with the passage of a specific period of time. He underlined Egypt's respect for human rights at the local and international levels.

It is necessary for me to refer here to some points which the two Egyptian officials did not touch on—namely, that the human rights reports aim in most cases to serve political objectives through the exertion of pressure and the undermining of Egypt's stability. Experience has proved that these reports are used to force some countries to capitulate to hegemony or for interference in these countries' internal affairs. What confirms this fact is these reports' intentional concentration on attacking the security organs that are fulfilling their duty of protecting the innocent citizens and defending the homeland's security and stability, while only briefly referring to the terrorist crimes in an attempt to deceive and to feign neutrality.

While respecting human rights and the importance of complying with their principles, it is nevertheless our duty to assert the importance of striking a fair balance between the terrorists' rights and the rights of their innocent victims and homelands.

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Musa Denies Urging Others Not To Set Israel Ties

TA1602114995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Feb 95 p 2

[Report by David Makovsky and news agencies]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and 'Usamah al-Baz, a leading adviser to President Husni Mubarak, have denied reports that Egypt is trying to influence African and Asian countries not to establish or renew diplomatic ties with Israel.

This was reported to ITIM by a Foreign Ministry source yesterday.

On Tuesday [14 February], Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the Egyptian ambassador to Tanzania had urged that country not to restore ties with Israel.

The source, however, said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry has denied that the ambassador was instructed to convey such a message to the Tanzanians.

Egypt, meanwhile, does not expect Israel to sign the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT) now, but it wants it to commit itself to a timetable for negotiations after regional peace is achieved, Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni said yesterday.

"We are not asking Israel to sign the NPT now," Basyuni declared. "We understand this issue is sensitive due to the security situation. However, there must be a timetable now about when Israel will negotiate."

A senior Israeli official, however, said this idea is unacceptable.

Israeli officials were also upset at Egypt's surprise move of presenting a draft treaty to other Arab states which would create a Middle East free of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Israel maintains all arms control issues should be discussed in the framework of multilateral working groups on arms control, in which it participates.

Egypt Bans Israeli Paper Over 'Offensive' Article

TA1602065495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egypt has banned the distribution of THE JERUSALEM POST, beginning next Monday. The Egyptian authorities conveyed this to THE JERUSALEM POST distributor in Cairo. David Bar-Ilan, the executive director of the POST, told David Essing that he was amazed that such a state, at peace with Israel, had taken an undemocratic position:

[Begin recording] [Bar-Ilan] Well, I must say I am quite astonished that a country that signed a peace treaty with Israel over 15 years ago should resort to this kind of totalitarian means in order to suppress what it considers unfair criticism. You realize that though I believe no paper should be prevented from being distributed anywhere and certainly shouldn't be banned, but you realize that this was not because of an alleged story that was either false or libelous but because they considered an opinion article by the former ambassador to the United Nations, Yehuda Blum, as offensive to the foreign minister. Now, that really smacks of Stalinism, and I am really amazed that Egypt would resort to this kind of thing.

[Essing] Well, we heard Prime Minister Rabin say yesterday in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset that a new wind, a foul wind, is blowing from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry these days. Do you think this is another example of that?

[Bar-Ilan] Absolutely. This is part and parcel of a kind of attitude which began, I think, quite a long time ago but which expressed itself mostly in the absolutely obsessive pursuit of the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] in relation to Israel, in which it became obvious that Egypt not only wanted Israel to withdraw to undefendable borders but also to make itself naked to its enemies so that it would not have even any kind of deterrent possibility.

[Essing] Do you plan on appealing or requesting support from international journalist organizations?

[Bar-Ilan] Yes, of course, and we are also hoping that the Foreign Ministry here will side with us. This is not only censorship but a ban that is unacceptable, I think, between any countries that are presumed to be in a state of peace with each other. [end recording]

Al-Baz Urges More Israeli 'Flexibility' With Palestinians

NC1102195095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1750 GMT 11 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has reaffirmed Egypt's eagerness to avoid a deadlock in negotiations along the various tracks. He said that Egypt supports the peace process on the basis that all parties concerned, including Israel, are committed to work for a comprehensive peace.

Al-Baz added in a statement today that real peace requires a serious disposition to conclude peace agreements with all the parties, particularly those who have shown a desire to achieve peace, like the Palestinian, the Syrian, and Lebanese parties.

Al-Baz expressed Egypt's concern at the deadlock in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, pointing out that the four-way summit held in Cairo recently at Egypt's invitation sought to give an impetus to negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track and accordingly support negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

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Usamah al-Baz remarked that a deadlock on the Syrian track threatens the entire peace process with a setback, because it is a complex process in which every single stone affects the entire structure. He underlined the need for Israel to show more flexibility in order to reach an agreement with the Palestinian Authority as soon as possible, particularly since the Palestinian side has shown its positive willingness and contributed considerably to the continued peace process.

Dr. al-Baz said that the terrorist operations that occurred in Israel, which were denounced by Egypt, constitute a problem that threatens stability, peace, and security in the region. He added that Egypt cannot dump the responsibility for these events on the Palestinian side, because similar operations occurred before the Palestinian Authority took over, when the Israeli authorities were in control of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Antinuclear Campaign Coordinator Explains Goals

NC1402132495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1200 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Bahij Nassar, president of the coordination center of Arab peace organizations and coordinator of the international campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons and ban their proliferation, has said that the campaign aims at promoting an international agreement for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons that is binding on all nations in order to save humanity from destruction.

In press statements, he said nongovernmental organizations; social and political forces; elected councils; scientific research centers; mass communication channels; religious and educational circles; youth organizations; unions of women, workers, and human rights activists; professional associations, and others are invited to participate in this campaign to protect the interests of the Arab peoples and the entire world and to maintain the security and safety of humanity.

He said the implementation of the campaign will be based on several steps, including the establishment of a communications network with all concerned organizations in Egypt, the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the world. He said organizations in Europe, North America, and Asia will be given special attention because of their influence on public opinion.

Dr. Nassar stressed the need for specific research studies to fuel and promote the campaign, such as providing facts about nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and elsewhere; preparing appropriate information in Arabic, French, and English; and publishing and distributing studies.

He noted the importance of engaging in certain activities to support the campaign, such as holding round tables and mobilizing youths, scientists, physicians, and workers in the areas of media and environment.

He said the campaign seeks to support efforts aimed at establishing nuclear-free zones in the Middle East and Africa, ensuring general and full commitment to the treaty, imposing a full ban on nuclear tests, and rejecting an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

It should be noted that the coordination center of the international campaign on nuclear disarmament is based at the headquarters of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization in Cairo and is headed by Dr. Murad Ghalib, the organization's chairman.

Paper on Aims of Israel's Having Nuclear Arms

NC1602100095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0702 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR newspaper has emphasized that Israel's aim in possessing nuclear weapons is to use implicit threats and blackmail to achieve its goals. It says this position is unacceptable in any country that respects itself and its citizens. It adds that Israel's adamant refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and its keeping various quantities of weapons of mass destruction mean that it is harboring undeclared intentions.

In its editorial today, the paper notes that there are two important points that the Israeli leaders and strategists must be fully aware of and that these two points diminish the significance of depending on nuclear weapons, particularly in Israel's case.

The paper explains that the first point is Israel's small area: Any territory inside Israel itself will not be safe from the repercussions of any attempt to use nuclear weapons in the region. Plus the majority of victims will be the population of the Jewish State itself.

The second and more important point is that nuclear arms production is no longer an insoluble problem, especially to countries that have the money, capabilities, and ability to buy scientists, which world markets are cluttered with since the Soviet Union's disintegration. This, the paper notes, is in addition to Russian mafia gangs who offer their loot of dangerous nuclear material to customers almost publicly.

Concluding its editorial, AL-AKHBAR asks, in light of the facts mentioned above, do Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and his comrades not realize that the possession of nuclear weapons needs reassessment?

Foreign Minister on Talks With U.S. Officials

NC1602104595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0825 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said that his meetings with U.S. Congressional leaders indicate that there is a profound interest in Egypt's role and a scrupulous following of every development in the peace process and the region's situation.

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In a statement to AL-AHRAM newspaper today, Musa said he sensed a profound understanding by the new Republican Congressional leaders for supporting Egyptian-U.S. relations and the assertion of Egypt's leading role in the region.

He added that he explained to the U.S. Administration and Congress the reasons for the Egyptian nation's concern over the presence of a nuclear state a few kilometers from its country's border.

Cabinet Discusses, Approves GATT Membership

NC1502180995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1445 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—At its meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi today, the Council of Ministers discussed a full report on the final document of the Uruguay Round on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT.

This was stated by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif. He said the discussions dealt with Egypt's approval of the agreement before presenting the matter to the People's Assembly. He noted that Egypt had signed the final document of the Uruguay Round but made adherence to the Agreement conditional on the approval of Egypt's constitutional institutions.

The information minister said that Economy Minister Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud explained the objective of GATT and the need for Egypt to join it as a general agreement on trade and tariff and a broad framework for the world trade system that would ensure stability of export markets apart from political trends. This will be achieved through the set of rules that countries have been applying since this system came into effect in 1948. Egypt became signatory of the Agreement in 1970.

Al-Sharif said the Council of Ministers had reviewed the effect of GATT on the Egyptian economy, based on the studies which Egypt began conducting in 1988 through subcommittees and a main committee representing all state institutions.

He said the Council of Ministers discussions also covered the various short- and long-term effects and dimensions of GATT in the areas of agriculture and the textile industry, in access to foreign markets, in protecting local production, and in the services sector.

The discussions also dealt with the financial services imposed by GATT and Egypt's policies in this respect. These include banking services, insurance, reinsurance, banknotes, construction, and tourism.

The information minister said the discussion of the Uruguay Round document also included intellectual property rights. He noted that an agreement was reached to ensure further protection of these rights in the areas of patents, authorship rights, artistic works, trade marks, and industrial designs. The agreement also sets out the relationship between the owner of the intellectual property right and the state or the companies that use this right.

The information minister said that Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi noted during the discussions the major steps Egypt has taken in the area of financial and monetary reform to create an appropriate environment for production and exports.

He said those steps will make Egyptian commodities competitive through persistent efforts to improve quality, observe technical specifications and international standards, and use advanced technology.

Minister al-Sharif said that Dr. Sidqi stressed the need for Egypt to benefit from the flexibility created by the host of new agreements, which require and at the same time contribute to the development of Egypt's economic and trade policy to serve the competitiveness Egypt hopes to achieve for its commodities.

He pointed out that as of the end of 1994, 81 countries had ratified GATT, and that the trade of those countries represent more than 90 percent of world trade.

The information minister said the discussions at the Council of Ministers showed that Egypt has made big strides in the area of liberalizing foreign trade through its economic reform program. This will limit its obligations resulting from joining GATT.

He said the discussions also showed that the negative effects of GATT, represented by a higher burden as a result of the import of agricultural commodities and the increase in international prices, will be offset by positive factors related to Egypt's product structure in favor of alternatives to imported products, which will achieve self-reliance in the future.

He said the Agreement opens new export opportunities to Egyptian products, provided that their quality and standards approve and meet the demand for these quantities on foreign markets, and provided that the state play a role in achieving maximum benefits through capable technical and administrative agencies.

The information minister said that the Council of Ministers had stressed that the provisions of the services agreement within GATT and the obligations undertaken by Egypt to liberalize the service sector fields of finance, construction, tourism, and sea transport, are all in line with Egyptian laws and legislations, and they fall within Egypt's policy of encouraging foreign investment, especially in these sectors.

He said the Council of Ministers had recommended that Egypt participate in the negotiations concerning such sectors as sea transport, movement of labor, and communications. The negotiations seek to further the liberalization of these sectors.

The Council also recommended that the service sectors conduct detailed studies of their situations in light of the

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GATT provisions and Egypt's obligations so that certain sectors can be prepared for liberalization and opening to foreign investment in light of the results of the upcoming negotiations, and so that these sectors will not be surprised by the obligations they will be required to assume. These sectors are: oil, mining, engineering consulting, transportation, accounting, and auditing.

Minister al-Sharif said the Council of Ministers had also recommended that the service sector study the liberalization commitments made by the various countries under the Uruguay Round in order to increase their chance of benefiting from the markets of those countries and to define the problems they face in those markets.

The information minister concluded his statement by saying that the Council also recommended that the subject of the trade in services and the relevant negotiations be followed at the national level, so that all services sectors and agencies in Egypt will be represented to deal with the new international trade system, which involves commodities and services, and to make gains for the Egyptian economy without letting agreements on protection, subsidies, and combating market flooding stand as obstacles to Egyptian exports.

[In a related Cairo-datelined item, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1555 GMT on 15 February reports that "the Council of Ministers has approved Egypt's accession to GATT and decided to forward the relevant draft Republican Decision to the president prior to referring it to the People's Assembly."]

Islamic Group, al-Jihad Seek Ties With Muslim Brotherhood

NC1502193395 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 8 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Midhat al-Zahid]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Imprisoned leaders of al-Jihad and the Islamic Group have agreed to support the Muslim Brotherhood in the People's Assembly elections scheduled for November.

In an exclusive statement to AL-AHALI, Muntasir al-Zayyat, a lawyer of al-Jihad and the Islamic Group, stressed that the two groups seek cooperation and an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. He said that despite tactical differences among these groups, they have much in common in principle. He said views can be brought closer regarding tactical differences. He said he had brought a message about this cooperation and that those concerned have received it.

Al-Zayyat disclosed that al-Jihad and Islamic Group leaders held consultations in prisons on the possible reflections of the Islamic awakening in Sudan, Algeria, and Yemen on the status of the "Islamic movement" in Egypt. He said those leaders found a need to help the Muslim Brotherhood to win a majority in the People's Assembly and to form a government.

Al-Zayyat said that despite the Islamic Group's negative position on the elections, the group's mufti, Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, did call on citizens to vote for the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic alliance in the 1984 elections. [passage omitted]

Security Concluding Interrogation of 'Terrorists'

NC1602112495 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 11 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by 'Adil al-Suruji]

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Security Prosecution Office will today complete its thorough interrogation of several terrorists who had directly collaborated with leading terrorists abroad. The terrorists include 'Abd-al-Hamid Abu-Ghunaymah and Hisham Aabazah, both of whom were arrested by the security service as they were trying to infiltrate the country using forged passports. The two terrorists had plans to carry out a number of terrorist operations and assassinate several politicians and police corps officials.

Terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah made important and definite confessions before Counselor Hisham Saraya, attorney general in the State Security Prosecution Office. He told the attorney general how terrorist Ahmad Hasan 'Abd-al-Jalil and the members of his group as well as terrorist Yasir Sidqi and his companions were killed. Terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah said he had conveyed instructions from leading terrorists abroad like Mustafa Hamzah, Ahmad Mustafa Nawaw, and Sharif 'Abd-al-Rahman, to terrorists inside the country on how to destabilize the situation and shake security.

Terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah gave detailed information about terrorist camps in several neighboring countries and how he became a member of these camps. He said that after his arrival in Afghanistan he was introduced to a number of leading terrorists, including terrorist 'Abd-al-Muhsin Shalash, the official in charge of the Islamic Group's archives. Abu-Ghunaymah was given a code name and a special file. He was then sent to "al-Khilafah" camp.

In his confessions, terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah pointed out that he was introduced to Egyptians who are members of the group and who train newcomers on the use of weapons and explosives. The terrorist explained how he lived in a camp used by the Egyptians who accompanied him to the front lines in Jalalabad. Abu-Ghunaymah affirmed that terrorist Mustafa Hamzah instructed him to return home. He said that his meeting with Hamzah took place in Sudan. He added that Hamzah gave him a Sudanese passport, a sum of money, and an entry visa to Chad. He was instructed to use the mountain trails between Egypt and Sudan on his way back to Egypt.

Continuing, terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah said that he was accompanied on this trip by terrorist Mahmud 'Abd-al-Salam 'Awad, and "the Professor Organization" leader terrorist Ahmad Hasan 'Abd-al-Jalil, who was

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killed by security forces. Abu-Ghunaymah affirmed that terrorist Mustafa Hamzah instructed him not to give any information about terrorist Ahmad Hasan 'Abd-al-Jalil if the latter is arrested by the security forces.

Terrorist Abu-Ghunaymah said that terrorist Mustafa Hamzah gave him fake and real telephone numbers. He said that upon arrival in the country he contacted defendant Muhammad Mustafa Darwish in Asyut. Abu-Ghunaymah added that Darwish provided him with a residence and introduced him to the Islamic Group leaders in Asyut. The group instructed him to carry out the tasks assigned to him.

Continuing, Abu-Ghunaymah said that during his stay in Asyut he was instructed to meet with terrorist al-Sayyid Mukhtar Ibrahim every 15 days. It should be recalled that terrorist Mukhtar had assassinated Major General Ra'uf Khayrat, who was in charge of the state security intelligence service. He said that he also met with a number of terrorist leaders who used fake names such as Ayman and Hafiz. Abu-Ghunaymah affirmed that he was introduced to terrorists Ashraf 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Shantli and Muhamad al-Yusufi.

The State Security Prosecution confronted the defendant with his arrest warrant and the passport which bears his photograph and the name of 'Abdallah Bilal. The passport was issued in Sudan. But the defendant denied the charges, pointing out that he was arrested by the security forces while boarding a bus in Dayr Mawas. The prosecution also confronted him with the official documents that show that he arrived at Sanaa airport on 28 July 1992; visited Nuwaybi' port on 19 September 1989; and returned to Cairo via the same port on 15 September 1990. The terrorist was confronted by a document showing his permit to enter Egypt on 7 September 1993.

Meanwhile, the State Security prosecution Office will continue its thorough interrogation of terrorist Hisham Abazah, who was arrested while trying to enter the country with a forged passport through a neighboring country. Abazah gave important information to the effect that he was authorized by terrorist leaders abroad to reestablish the terrorist group. He said that the instructions were passed by fugitive terrorist Aymman al-Zawahiri. Abazah said that he was given a large sum of money to complete the job.

Terrorist Abazah affirmed that he visited several countries, including Afghanistan, Sudan, and Libya. He also visited a European country where he met with Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front leaders to coordinate efforts. He said that he formed a group of 43 terrorists who have all been arrested. The majority of the group members hail from Abu Kabir, Port Said, and al-Tall al-Kabir.

The terrorists are charged with joining a terrorist group tasked with carrying out terrorist actions, disrupting security, shaking stability, planning to assassinate prominent personalities and police officers, and blowing up vital installations.

Counselor Hisham Saraya is expected to present the results of his investigations to Prosecutor General Raja' al-'Arabi.

Cabinet on Need To Confront Attempts To 'Incite'

NC1502153195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In its meeting today chaired by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, the Council of Ministers discussed a report by the interior minister on the security services' activity against the elements of violence and their efforts to besiege and capture them, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said.

He said the report referred to attempts to incite by a few elements practicing banned activity and taking advantage of their presence in or infiltration of professional associations. These elements are also trying to depart from the objective of trade union activity, which is to serve union members.

The interior minister said in his report that these elements refuse the measures that achieve justice and ensure democracy and sound professional representation. They also refuse to subject this representation to judicial supervision.

The information minister said the Council of Ministers stressed the need to respect the law and reject attempts by the minority to impose their trusteeship. It also stressed the need to confront attempts to incite or depart from legitimacy with a view to safeguarding the security and stability of the homeland and protecting the rights of the majority.

The information minister said the Council of Ministers also discussed a report presented by the minister of economy and foreign trade on every aspect of GATT.

Sudan

Government Demands U.S. Release Jailed Nationals

EA1502203595 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry issued a statement today in which it condemned the unfounded American allegations and accusations that Sudan's permanent mission to the United Nations was involved in the blowing up of UN buildings, and the killing of some personalities, which 137 people and institutions are accused of.

The statement explained that the American allegations are part of a series of allegations that target Sudan, its security, stability, and faith. The statement condemned the inhuman treatment which the Sudanese accused of these incidents are being subjected to. It pointed out that the American authorities are imposing the eating of pork on them, and forbidding them from eating what is

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lawful. They are also preventing them from praying in a group, and from performing the Friday prayer.

The Foreign Ministry statement asserted that Sudan rejects the keeping of the accused persons in solitary confinement on the basis of unsubstantiated and unproven accusations, at a time when the United States is waging vicious campaigns against others on the pretext that they have violated human rights.

The statement demanded that the American authorities release the accused Sudanese immediately, and put them on trial if there is proof against them.

Justice Minister Condemns U.S. Allegations

EA1502220095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in English 1800 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minister of Justice 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu has strongly condemned the U.S. Federal Prosecutor's allegations placing Sudan's permanent mission to the United Nations on a list [of] conspirators involved in bombing UN building in New York. Shiddu described the U.S. accusations against Sudan's mission as just a mere allegation, saying that U.S. allegations unfairly aimed at provoking Sudan's involvement in terrorist acts. The accusations, which include also non-Sudanese nationals, are legally baseless and lost credibility, he said.

President al-Bashir Rejects Human Rights Reports

EA1502192795 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, president of the Republic, addressed the mass celebration held in Kassala town this morning to mark the completion of the training of more than 50,000 mujahidin from al-Furqan and Badr al-Kubra Legions. His Excellency reaffirmed Sudan's adherence to the application of Islamic law. He said the enemies are lying in wait for Sudan to make it renounce the application of shari'ah law.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir added that the National Salvation Revolution sends a message to the entire world. It confirms that the Islamic nation has been reborn. The leader of the revolution confirmed that the state cares about those who memorize the Holy Koran. He said the revolution is striving to revive their role in society.

The president of the Republic rejected reports by human rights organizations against Sudan. He affirmed that human rights in Sudan are guaranteed because it is a divine matter. His Excellency (?called on) these organizations to base their reports on reality, pointing out that Sudan is a country open to all.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir renewed the call to rebels to return to the homeland. He said the revolution is striving to proclaim peace in the country. The revolution is also striving to complete the political system.

The president of the Republic will this evening witness the conclusion of the 22d Holy Koran national festival.

Tunisia

Algerian GIA Said Responsible for Border Attack

LD1502201295 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In Tunisia a border post was attacked last week and, according to certain sources, it could have been an operation carried out by Algerian Islamists. Chantal Lorho:

[Lorho] [passage omitted] According to Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of the Tunisian Islamist movement, Ennahdha, who is in exile in London, this was a reprisal operation carried out by the Algerian GIA [Armed Islamic Group], which recently discovered that an agent working for the Tunisian Security Service was attempting to infiltrate its ranks. Mr. Ghannouchi stressed that Saturday's [11 February] raid was intended as a warning signal to the Ben Ali regime, and to warn it against interfering in Algeria's internal affairs. [passage omitted]

Raid Viewed as 'Warning'

NC1502195795 Paris AFP in English 1832 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Feb 15 (AFP)—Algerian fundamentalists mounted a cross-border raid into Tunisia last week to warn Tunisia not to infiltrate the Islamic movement in Algeria, a Tunisian fundamentalist leader said here Wednesday [15 February].

Rashed Ghannoushi told AFP that "a Tunisian official tried to infiltrate the GIA in Algeria, but he was discovered."

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) is the most extreme of the Moslem fundamentalist guerrilla groups that have been fighting the military-backed secular regime in Algeria for three years.

According to an unsourced report in the French daily LIBERATION on Wednesday [15 February], GIA guerrillas last week crossed the border, killed six Tunisian border guards and made off with their weapons and a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

LIBERATION said that after the attack, the Algerian guerrillas fell back to the Negrine district of their own country. Tunisia has denied the report.

The influential daily AL-HAYAH, published in several Arab and European capitals, on Tuesday reported that Algerian armed fundamentalists killed seven Tunisian frontier guards at a post at Sendes, on the southern stretch of the border near an oasis popular with tourists.

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AL-HAYAH cited Islamist sources and said that "if the report is confirmed, it would be the first time one of Algeria's neighbours has been targetted" by armed fundamentalists seeking to topple the army-backed secular regime in Algiers.

The Tunis daily AL-SABAH, also in an unsourced report, said two national guard gendarmes were killed and four others wounded when their four-wheel-drive vehicle plunged into a ravine.

Ghannoushi said his sources had told him the GIA had "discovered there were many previous attempts" at infiltration by Tunisia.

"The GIA believe the Tunisian government encourages the Algerian government to crush its Islamists. They reacted by attacking the police station at the border."

"It's a warning to the Tunisian regime," he added.

Ghannoushi, who has been living in exile here for four years and was granted political asylum in 1993, said his own group, Annadha, was "totally non-violent" and disapproved of the GIA's actions.

But he added: "The Tunisian government is responsible for what happened."

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Kuwait

Interior Minister on 'Terrorist' Ramzi Yusuf Case

NC1502100895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0842 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 15 Feb (MENA)—Kuwaiti Interior Minister Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim has affirmed that his country is willing to provide the U.S. judicial authorities with all information available to it on terrorist Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, the mastermind of the explosion of the New York World Trade Center.

In a statement published here today, he said terrorist Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf had committed many terrorist operations in Kuwait, particularly in the first months of the Iraqi occupation in 1990, when he carried out terrorist attacks against Kuwaiti citizens.

Meanwhile, MENA's correspondent has learned from "a responsible Kuwaiti security source" that the Kuwaiti authorities have actually compiled a thorough file on this Iraqi terrorist since he was born in Kuwait until he fled the country before the liberation war in February 1991.

The security source said the Kuwaiti authorities have very important information on this terrorist. This information, he added, will be at the disposal of any security or judiciary authority wanting such information, as the Kuwaiti security authorities are eager to eradicate the hotbeds of terrorism in various parts of the world.

Terrorist Ramzi Yusuf was arrested in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad last week after the U.S. security agencies hunted for him in many countries.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi-Yemeni Talks To Move From Riyadh to Mecca

LD1502212895 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, hosted an Iftar [meal to break the fast] banquet at his farm in al-Buwaybiyah, in honor of Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemeni parliament, and the members of the delegation accompanying him who are taking part in the Saudi-Yemeni talks being held in Riyadh.

During the banquet, the two sides discussed in a cordial atmosphere issues concerning the Arab and Muslim nation, foremost among them Saudi-Yemeni relations.

Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ahmar thanked His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and told him he appreciated his good and kind efforts in the interest of the Muslim and Arab nation. In a statement to the Saudi news agency, he said that the Saudi-Yemeni talks will move from Riyadh to the holy city of Mecca. He added that these talks will be concluded in Mecca next to the Kaaba, God willing.

The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin- 'Abd-al-'Aziz, governor of Riyadh region, His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, and other princes and ministers, as well as 'Ali al-Qufaydi, Saudi ambassador to Yemen, the Yemeni ambassador to the kingdom, and senior civilian and military officials.

At the end of the banquet, His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin- 'Abd-al-'Aziz offered gifts to Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ahmar and the members of the delegation accompanying him.

More on Continuation of Talks

NC1602051095 Paris AFP in English 2147 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Feb 15 (AFP)—Yemen and Saudi Arabia are to press on with talks aimed at resolving their border dispute on Saturday in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, a Yemeni negotiator said Wednesday.

The talks, which opened in Riyadh on January 23, are being transferred because Saudi government officials are to travel to nearby Mecca for the last 10 days of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, said negotiator 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal.

Ba-Jammal, Yemen's planning minister and deputy prime minister, was speaking after Sanaa warned the border talks could be suspended if they failed to achieve a breakthrough in coming days.

Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih on Monday [13 February] accused the Saudis of blocking progress in the talks, saying "we are still awaiting results" from three weeks of negotiations.

Ba-Jammal told AFP: "We have tried to cushion the impact on the course of negotiations of the speech made by President Salih on Monday.

"The speech is just a sincere reproach between brothers and it will in no way affect relations between the two countries, as President Salih was anxious for the success of the negotiations," Ba-Jammal said.

An official in Sanaa said Wednesday that the talks were stalled as the two sides could not agree on a joint approach to resolving the dispute.

Meanwhile U.S. defence experts quoted in a strategic newsletter said Wednesday that Saudi Arabia was massing armour and artillery on the disputed border and that a new clash appeared likely.

The two Arab peninsula neighbours dispute three provinces near the border which were assigned to Saudi Arabia in a 1934 accord.

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The conflict has flared into several armed clashes, the latest on January 10 in which more than 50 people were killed, according to diplomats.

Ba-Jammal was speaking after Iftar, the Ramadan meal which breaks the daily fast at sundown, which was hosted by Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz in honour of the Yemeni delegation.

United Arab Emirates

Paper Views Israeli Nuclear 'Blackmail'

JN1302201595 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 9 Feb 95 p 1

[Editorial: "Blackmailing All Arabs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arabs do not need to reflect for long to understand why Israel is keeping a nuclear arsenal of 200 warheads at least, including hydrogen and nitrogen warheads with a destructive power thousands of times that of the Hiroshima bomb.

The Israeli nuclear program has cost over $50 billion thus far and maintenance and development work needs over $1 billion a year. This amount cannot possibly be spent just for show or to enjoy membership in the world nuclear club. But all Arabs, from the Atlantic Ocean to the eastern shores of the [Arabian] Gulf, are the target, first for blackmail, and, then, for mass destruction if blackmail fails. Israel has the tools to deliver the weapons of mass destruction to any Arab capital, and beyond if need be.

Such a situation is unacceptable and the Arabs have only one of two things to do. First, to remove the Israeli nuclear arsenal and abolish the Israeli program of nuclear armament all together under international pressure and through diplomatic moves as part of the price for peace which Israel must pay in exchange for recognizing its existence as a constituent element in this part of the world. Several Arab states believe that the United States is capable of doing just that, and is even a duty which it must fulfill not only to complete the Middle East peace process, but also because it is a requirement dictated by the U.S. strategic interests in both the short and long terms. Second, the Arabs must seek to obtain counter deterrent weapons. This means an endless nuclear race which we sincerely hope we will not have to pursue. However, it will regrettably be the only option if the diplomatic efforts fail to stop the Israeli nuclear blackmail.

Doors are still open for the peaceful option. If the lust for expansion and hegemony is blinding the Israelis from seeing that, we are very hopeful that the United States will not be as blind.

Muslim Preachers Told To Stick to Prepared Text

NC1402124095 Paris AFP in English 0824 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 14 (AFP)—The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has told its Moslem preachers to stick to texts prepared by religious authorities for their Friday open air prayers, newspapers reported Tuesday [14 February].

The reports did not give reasons for the instructions but mosque sources said the ministry had received complaints some preachers were bypassing the prepared text to attack Israel, Russia and the Serbs.

President Shaykh Zayyid bin Sultan al-Nuhayyan, 78, issued the instructions in a letter for the Islamic Affairs and Endowments Ministry, which summoned Moslem clerics on Monday, the reports said.

"The president urged Friday preachers to stick to the context of the sermons prepared by the ministry to achieve benefits and preserve public interests," the semi official daily AL-ITTIHAD said.

It quoted Islamic Affairs and Endowments Minister, Shaykh Muhammad bin-Ahmad al-Khazraji, as asking the scholars to "implement the president's letter in text and spirit."

Most Moslem clerics in the UAE are foreigners, especially from Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Jordan.

Yemen

Salih Hands U.S. Envoy Letter to Clinton

JN1502174095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih today received David Newton, U.S. Ambassador to our country, and handed him a letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The letter deals with bilateral relations, regional developments, and the ongoing negotiations between our country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to resolve the Yemeni-Saudi border problem.

In the letter, the brother president reasserted our country's concern about resolving the border problem with the brothers in Saudi Arabia through negotiations, peaceful dialogue, and mutual understanding, avoiding the use of force in a way that will secure the legitimate rights and enhance regional security, stability, and peace.

Consultations in Progress for New Cabinet

MM1502100695 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Feb 95 pp1, 4

[Report by Iqbal 'Abdallah: "Consultations in Sanaa for Formation of New Cabinet"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa—Political sources in Sanaa yesterday spoke of consultations going on in Yemeni political circles with a view to considering the formation of a new cabinet to succeed the present cabinet formed last October and headed by 'Abd-al-'Aziz

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'Abd-al-Ghani, assistant secretary general of the General People's Congress [GPC], one of the two ruling coalition parties.

The sources said that "the opposition parties sent a memorandum to President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih which included a call for the formation of a government of national unity with the participation of all the political forces of the country, following the failure of the current government, consisting of representatives from the GPC and the [Yemeni] Reform [Grouping] [YRG], to halt the continuing deterioration of the economic and security situation." [passage omitted]

Officials of the government, which has been meeting continuously to find a way out of the crisis, have refused to confirm or deny reports about imminent formation of a new cabinet, and said that "the situation is serious and tackling it requires everyone's efforts." [passage omitted]

Official: No Iranians in Hadhramaut, Iraqis Withdrawn

MM1302141795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by 'Abdallah Hammudah: "Prominent Yemeni Official Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Have Washed Our Hands of the Iranians Because They Do Not Fulfill Their Promises"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—A prominent Yemeni Government member has denied the presence of Iranian forces in al-Mukalla, capital of Hadhramaut. He said, "that is untrue. We washed our hands of the Iranians some time ago, because they are like the Libyans: They make promises but do not fulfill them. If you want something from them, they demand a big price for it. If you move closer to them, that is the real danger."

The official—who asked to remain anonymous for "diplomatic" reasons—denied that telephone contacts have been made between Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his former deputy, 'Ali Salim al-Bid, contrary to what sources close to al-Bid said. However, the minister said that "the Yemeni president is continuing his telephone contacts with all oppositionists abroad, and he succeeded in contacting al-Bid once, but al-Bid did not talk to him. He heard some words and and put the receiver down."

On the issue of stirring up tension in Hadhramaut, the Yemeni official said that he is in constant touch with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani. And that "there are open endeavors to calm conditions and achieve reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, not to strain the situation." He added that "we have withdrawn the Iraqis who were in the arms workshop and the airport. The forces present there (in Hadhramaut) are from the 8th Brigade and the al-Wahdah Brigade. We have huge forces. We do not need personnel, even though we need weapons."

This came as a reply to southern sources' claim that there are Iranian and Iraqi troops in Hadhramaut, and that "Iranians can be seen in large numbers in the streets of al-Mukalla and based on the hills behind the Khalaf mountains overlooking the port, and in the air defense units' positions there."

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Al-Sahhaf Renews Offer for Saudi, Kuwaiti Talks

JN1502155695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1350 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Rabat, 15 Feb (INA)—Iraq has reiterated its readiness for dialogue with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait within the framework of pan-Arab eagerness to maintain the Arab nation's interests and to protect its future against foreign influences and ambitions.

In a statement published by the newspaper AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI here today, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said Iraq is continuing its contacts with its Arab brethren in general, and even Gulf states such as Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. He said Iraq is open for any contacts, even with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, if they resort to reason.

He stressed that Iraq's motive behind this openness is to ensure the future. He said: Everyone is currently suffering. It is true that we are suffering from the blockade, but our situation is better than theirs. This situation upsets every Arab who believes in joint Arab destiny.

Al-Sahhadf explained that his visit to Morocco is part of this Iraqi orientation. He said: My current tour of a number of Arab countries falls within the framework of a comprehensive Iraqi move with two major objectives. The first is to maintain bilateral relations with all Arab countries and to explore the prospects of their enhancement. The second is to acquaint the brethren with the facts about Iraq's implementation of all its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 687, which includes a paragraph that obliges the UN Security Council to lift the four-year blockade imposed on Iraq.

The foreign minister praised Morocco's efforts during the recent Islamic Casablanca summit. He said the summit, despite its failure to adopt a positive stand on the lifting of the blockade against Iraq, a considerable majority at the conference wanted the file of the Iraq blockade closed.

He noted that Iraq chose not to ask that majority to do anything beyond their silence during the brawl which raged between the Iraqi delegation and the Kuwaiti and Saudi delegations motivated by its respect for Morocco, the hosting country, and by its eagerness to ensure the success of the conference.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf warned the Arab countries against the gravity of indifference toward the cracks in the pan-Arab wall of inter-Arab relations and Arab security. He said some parties with illegitimate interests seek to maintain the state of Arab weakness and to exploit this state in the service of their objectives.

The foreign minister accused the United States of obstructing and delaying the completion of the UN Monitoring Committee's report with the aim of prolonging the blockade against Iraq in the service of its evil policies. He said that the majority of UN Security Council members object to that policy.

He added that many European states now realize that the current situation in the Gulf does not serve their interests. Therefore, they are moving to serve their interests away from U.S. hegemony. He welcomed any European party that contacts Iraq in the service of their bilateral interests.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf reiterated Iraq's denial that it is holding any Kuwaitis. He said Iraq welcomes any Arab, Islamic, regional, or international effort or committee. He said: Our brethren in the Gulf have proposed the formation of a fact-finding Gulf committee. However, that proposal was rejected by Kuwait, which also rejected a proposal by Indonesian President Suharto to form a nonaligned committee.

He indicated that the Kuwaitis talk about missing persons rather than prisoners. He said that there are missing Americans who have been searched for since the Vietnam war. Moreover, he said, some missing persons have been sought since the end of the World War II.

Army Said To Suffer 'Serious Losses' in South

MM1502165495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 95 pp1, 4

[Report by Zuhayr Qusaybati and Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Baghdad Announces Repulsion of 'Iranian Attack,' Threatens Tehran and Warns Kuwait"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Iraq has announced the "repelling of an Iranian aggression" after "fierce battles" and a "major offensive," and threatened a "decisive response," but Iran denied involvement in any attack, emphasizing that "it is an internal Iraqi affair," in a reference to the opposition to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's regime. REUTER said that an Iraqi official spokesman warned Kuwait against "violating the principles of international law by funding activities against Iraq and its sovereignty."

According to Iraqi opposition sources, President Saddam Husayn was in al-Qurnah in southern Iraq last Sunday where "he supervised the operations of the 4th Army Corps" repelling the attack.

They said that the Iraqi Army "suffered serious losses and the dead included 25 officers." They also spoke of "continuing skirmishes" in the south and confirmed that some Army elements cooperated with the attacking groups. The same sources said that "the internal situation in Iraq is disturbed" as a result of the attack, reflected in "a new collapse in the value of the dinar."

Informed sources in Tehran and Damascus have told AL-HAYAH that fierce battles broke out last Saturday in the area of Hawr al-Hawizah near al-Qurnah (where the

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rivers Tigris and Euphrates meet) in al-Basrah Governorate between forces of the Badr Corps of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and forces of the Iraqi Army's 4th Corps.

The sources said that "the battle ended with the retreat of the Badr forces into Iranian territory after the 4th Corps inflicted heavy losses on them, capturing a number of the attackers." They confirmed the Iraqi official statement that the POW's captured by the Iraqi forces included some Iranians. [passage omitted]

Government Official Calls On U.S. To Deal With Iraq

JN1202174595 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 4 Feb 95 pp 1,6

[Article by Nuri Najm al-Marsumi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information: "Iraq and the United States: Legitimate Queries!!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States continues its hostile attitude toward Iraq. And, whenever the UN Security Council meets to review the unfair sanctions, this attitude takes new shapes while retaining the substance of the political stand which is represented by the insistence on maintaining the blockade. In light of this situation, certain legitimate, logical, and practical queries impose themselves. These queries, or some of them, may have been raised before. Foremost among these queries are: What does the United States want from Iraq? Does Iraq really know what the United States wants from it? Is it possible to arrive at a balance between U.S. demands and Iraqi stands? For how long will the U.S. Administration be able to sell its changing and renewed ideas to the members of the Security Council and the international community and can it continue to ignore the increasing Arab and world demands for lifting the blockade on Iraq?!!

All these queries and others deserve contemplation and a serious search for objective answers away from emotions, while the Iraqi people continue their splendid and legendary steadfastness against the blockade and while its historical leadership presents a unique model in human history on how to deal with an unjust blockade and its economic, social, and cultural effects.

What does the United States want from Iraq?

We say the United States, because the situation resulting from the Security Council debates confirms that the United States alone poses an obstacle to every new review which is aimed at revising the sanctions on legal and fair bases. Even Britain has taken a different stand from the United States despite its ultimate alignment with the U.S. position!! The United States speaks about the full implementation of the Security Council resolutions. This talk no longer impresses anyone and has become an old tune now that the world understands that Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations under the Council resolutions. Governments, organizations and parties can no longer digest the U.S. call about the full implementation of the Council resolutions. This expression has become common and shallow. The pretexts, excuses, and issues which U.S. representative Albright raises during the debates have no relationship with the Security Council resolutions. During the past two months, the United States has drifted far from the substance of the Council resolutions. The story about "palace building" in Iraq has become known day after day, and world nations are now certain that the United States has other political aims which it cannot announce openly in the context of the Iraqi relationship with the Security Council. In light of this U.S. logic, we recall that the French foreign minister has said in one of his statements that whenever the Security Council imposes an embargo on a state it should clearly specify its objectives and demands from that state. It is clear that the French foreign minister was referring to the United States, because it is the one concerned, and not anyone else, with all the embargoes which have been imposed on several countries in the world!!

In its statements outside the Security Council and in the media, the United States talks about the policy of containing Iraq. The intention here is to weaken Iraq, curtail its role, and prevent it from making any economic progress or building its military power, and therefore cancel its influence in the region.

Besides this policy, we have heard about U.S. plots being hatched and dollars being spent generously for the sake of plotting against the national regime in Iraq. If we review the trends of this policy during the past four years, we will find that they have been a complete failure. It has been proven that Iraq is difficult to contain. In fact, Iraq is rising. It has rebuilt its industrial capabilities and the infrastructure for its general economic development which the United States has tried to destroy during the aggression. Iraq has also foiled all plots. The so-called "security zone" in the northern part of our dear homeland has turned into a theater for bloody massacres which the autonomous region has never witnessed before!! Iraq's Arab and international relations have also improved, while the isolation of the United States and its allies has increased. Just as U.S. ambitions in Iraq have fizzled out, events have proven the failure of U.S.-Zionist liquidatory plans against the Palestine question. U.S. agents in the region are facing big internal problems due to the indignation of the masses and their rejection of subservient policies and the woes and tragedies they cause!! Despite the circumstances and effects of the blockade, Iraq has emerged stronger and more capable of fulfilling its pan-Arab and humanitarian role. Therefore, is it not time the U.S. Administration dealt with the facts of reality without presumption so as not to lose Iraq and everything in our Arab homeland?!!

U.S. politicians must not be prompted by their narrow-minded interests and designs but try to expand their horizon and take into consideration the effective elements in the region. They must consider the people's

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role, comprehend the geography and history of the region, and understand the laws which govern the course of development in societies in our age and in all ages.

Does Iraq know what the United States wants from it?

If we try not to be analytical or sound complicated and resort to simplicity in raising important issues by putting the question directly to the management of Iraqi diplomacy, the answer will come as no. Now that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under the Security Council resolutions, there is nothing left. Besides, the U.S. Administration has not submitted to Iraq any written list of demands for stopping its opposition to lifting the blockade and ending the hostility to Iraq. It is an international custom that whenever a conflict occurs between two states or group of states, the problems of the conflict are clarified and the demands are made known. Diplomacy then begins its work to bring the viewpoints closer to one another and mutual concessions are made in order to reach common factors or compromise, as they say. If diplomacy fails, the states then resort to other means in order to reach what they want. But this has not happened. There has been no U.S. talk about problems with Iraq, with the exception of the unfair general judgments which are being made by U.S. officials. We have not heard of any talk which can serve as a basis for dialogue and discussion. Even the talk about containing Iraq is incomprehensible and cannot possibly mean blockading Iraq. Like Iraq, Iran has been singled out for containment, at least publicly, but it is not besieged economically, culturally, in the air, or on land.

If we set aside simplicity in raising issues, we in Iraq know what the United States wants from us. It has already given us "Arab" examples such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and others. It wants Iraq to mortgage its wealth with U.S. companies without competition from other states and, God forbid, to humbly enter the circle of suspicious alliances which are being concluded in the region without any sense of shame! Above all, they want Iraq to shed its national and Arab skin and put on the skin which was worn by Saudi, Kuwait, and other rulers!! This is impossible in part and parcel. Iraq has a noble people with a glorious past. Its historical leadership represented by Saddam Husayn is a leadership with a message; a leadership of radical change unlike other rulers which the U.S. Administration deals with. This is the secret of U.S. weariness and exhaustion with Iraq!!

Now that the truth behind U.S. ideas has been revealed, how long can the United States continue to resist the powerful will of the states and peoples which are demanding the removal of the blockade?

The United States may succeed temporarily in exploiting the international circumstances of certain Security Council member states due to their preoccupation with hot issues in their countries, and try to prevent a serious debate on lifting the sanctions on Iraq, as in the case of the recent review when all eyes were focused on what is going in Chechnia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. But these circumstances will not continue forever. Moreover, the positions and reactions of states inside and outside the region are rapidly developing and crystallizing toward lifting the blockade. In the Arab Gulf region, only the Saudi and Kuwaiti rulers are still maintaining their hostile attitudes. Officials in Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have made clear public statements calling for an end to the suffering and dealing with Iraq realistically. And in the Arab homeland in general, official and popular stands are developing and constituting big pressure at this stage. On the level of the Security Council, Russia, France, and China are seriously considering the drafting of a resolution to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 786 on lifting the oil embargo. And in the world at large, humanitarian organizations and societies are active in this direction.

It is definite that in the face of all these activities, the United States will be unable to pedal its ideas. The world has exposed all cards and has become certain that the United States wants to destroy Iraq after it has failed to include it within its zone of influence. Iraq is the only obstacle to its continued domination of the region.

It remains for us to say that Iraq has not declared war on the United States as the United States itself has done. Iraq also, and from the position of upholding its independence, sovereignty, and freedom, has not set reservations for its relationship with world nations, including the United States, other than with those which are hostile to it and cause harm to its people. Despite all that has happened and all the crimes which the United States has committed against the Iraqi people, the United States has a chance to go back on and reconsider its present attitude and return to rationality and the principles of justice and international law in dealing with the Iraqi issue.

Increasing Sanctions-Related Fatalities Reported

JN1202122495 Baghdad INA in English 1030 GMT 12 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb. 12 (INA)—The health situation in Iraq is worsening after more than four and a half years of United Nations economic sanctions that have prevented the purchase of food and medical supplies for Iraq's 19 million people.

A Trade Ministry source said on Sunday the UN sanctions have caused a wide-spread of congenital defects and marasmus incidences among children.

The source said UN economic sanctions have caused a shortage of baby milk causing in consequence a spread of malnutrition among children and an increase in congenital defects and marasmus incidences among children under the age of five.

"The sanctions have deprived Iraq of its capability to provide food and medicine to its people," the source said. "The situation is worsened because Iraq's foreign assets of nearly 4.5 billion dollars are also frozen and are

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only released in small trickles if, and when, Iraq is permitted to make purchases for its humanitarian needs," the source said.

Prior to the war and the imposition of sanctions, Iraq was used to import up to 300 million dollar annually of baby milk, the source said, adding that shortfall in infant milk stands at some 40 per cent of the actual need.

There is also a sharp rise in under weight births compared with rates recorded during pre-war period, according to the source.

The UN sanctions have deprived Iraq of its oil revenues which are used to constitute 90 per cent of the country's revenues before August 1990.

Most recently, a report by the Ministry of Health has showed that fatalities among Iraqi people over the past month of December have risen sharply because of acute shortage of food and medicines emanating from the ongoing economic sanctions imposed on the country.

The report indicated that some 7,409 Iraqi people have died over the said period because of the continuation of the economic sanctions that deprived the Iraqi people of food and medicine.

The report added some 5,502 children under the age of five perished because of diarrheas malnutrition and pneumonia, while some 1,907 people over the age of 50 died because of diabetes, hypertension and malignant neoplasms.

The ministry's report noted that during December 1989, a year before the imposition of sanctions, the number of children struck by malnutrition related diseases was 81, whereas the number of children fatalities over the same period in 1994 reached some 2,336 scoring an increase of 2,784 per cent.

Moreover, the report showed that diarrhea has claimed the lives of 101 children under the age of five over the month of December, 1989, in comparison with some 1,173 deaths recorded during the same period in 1994, that is some 1061.4 per cent increase.

Likewise, the number of children fatalities because of pneumonia during 1994 recorded a sharp increase of 1603.4 per cent, the report pointed out, indicating that the number of deaths registered during December 1989 was 119 in comparison with some 1,993 deaths for the same period in 1994.

As for patients who suffer from chronic diseases, the report noted that hypertension, diabetes and cancer were the main causes of the death of some 1,907 people.

According to the ministry's report, some 82 people died because hypertension over the month of December, 1989, in comparison with 384 who died over the same period in 1994, recording an almost 368.3 per cent increase over 1989's figure.

According to the report, some 1,219 people suffering from malignant neoplasms have died during December compared with some 247 ones died over the same period in 1989.

The cause of the sharp rise in death is blamed on the inadequate radio therapy received by patients who suffer from malignant tumours as a result of shortage of medicine caused by the embargo.

According to initial outcome of a research team of experts, scientists and researchers from universities and health institutes who conducted visits to the sites of military operations and interviewed many medical specialists to define the impact of the war led by U.S. on the health of Iraqi citizens, there is an increase of two folds, or even more, in the incidence of epidemic vertigo for the years 1991-1993 specially during spring and summer. Also many cases of an undiagnozd disease were reported, its symptoms are blindness in the lateral part of the eye followed by attacks of headache and numbers. These cases started to be reported about six months after the military operations. All the examinations including EEG and CAT-scan showed negative results.

There is an increase in the incidences of cancers such as acute leukemia (myloid, lymphatic, undifferentiated, etc.) and in the incidence of relapse cases compared to those of 1990 and before.

There is a drastic increase in the cancer cases of children and youth. Some 10-15 cases are being reported daily after the aggression compared to only 2-3 cases prior to that.

Anemia cases had increased due to many factors including malnutrition resulting from difficult health, psychological and socio-economic situation resulting from the aggression and UN sanctions.

An increase in the incidence rate of congenital malformation cases such as phacomelia, achodroplasia and mongolism were reported. Similar increases were reported for the cases of other types of congenital malformation, bone dysplasia, central nervous system disorders and anencephally. All these are attributed to the aggression.

Editorial Warns Kurds Against Foreign Option

JN1402134095 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 4 Feb 95 p 1

[Editorial: "The Plotters Against Kurdistan and Washington's Orders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States has instructed its agent Ahmad al-Jalabi to direct an ultimatum to the warring factions in the Kurdistan Region to end the fighting, otherwise it will stop its assistance, support, and air cover for the region. This is what has been reported in the news.

Thus, so simply, fighting escalates, subsides, or stops from time to time according to U.S. demands and

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Washington's strategy, which is aimed at splitting the Kurds, sowing the seeds of hatred and revenge between them, and entrenching a state of division and psychological rift between the warring factions so that they will become merely tiny groups liquidating one another and wasting their capabilities and energies on mutual hatred and satisfying the whims of the local party leaders, whose sole interest is to enrich themselves by forcibly collecting taxes from the citizens and seizing customs revenues!!

For thousands of years, Kurds have been known for their glorious national history and as a people who uphold their national values, customs, and traditions, which have remained their potent weapon for defending their unity, cohesion, and solidarity. Never before have differences in opinion been a cause for resort to enemy support in fighting one another. Experience and tribulations have taught the Kurds that submitting to the will of the foreigner will not achieve any legitimate national aspiration or lead them to safety and stability within the national unity of the great Iraqi family.

Several local leaders had tried in the past to link Kurdish national destiny to foreign quarters by depending on false promises and trying to make personal gains at the expense of the aspirations and hopes of Iraqi Kurds. But their wagers and options failed each time thanks to the Kurdish people's faith in the national option and solution and rejection of foreign protection and support.

Thus, the events and experiences of the recent past have proven that there is no solution other than the honorable national solution. This is the decision of honest Kurds. It is a final option and there is no other alternative to it, regardless of the mean and cheap attempts by the agents to deviate from this national position and to fall at the feet of the foreigner.

True patriotism and nationalism shall remain the weapon of Iraqi Kurds whenever the plotting intensifies against their existence and true Iraqi identity. This is why all conspiratorial plans and programs have been wrecked on the rock of their national unity and faith in the common destiny of Arabs and Kurds under the big tent of Iraq; the Iraq of leader Saddam Husayn, the engineer of autonomy.

Thus, we say that the local party leaders in Kurdistan, who are swimming against the current of the national aspirations of Iraqi Kurds, will certainly drown if they do not come to their senses and get out of the quagmire of the foreigner. They will be carried away by the arms of the grandsons of Kawah the blacksmith and thrown in the dump where every plotter against the people and homeland belongs.

It is a warning and advice to anyone who wants to save what can be saved before it is too late.

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Rabin, Peres To Meet With 'Arafat at Erez

TA1502132495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres will jointly meet with Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez checkpoint tomorrow. This was concluded by the two in a meeting they held in Jerusalem. Ministers Sarid and Shahal, who regularly attend the meetings with 'Arafat, will not participate in tomorrow's meeting.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that in their meeting, Rabin and Peres also dealt with party issues and the appointment of an ambassador to Jordan. The two apparently discussed the manning of the vacant government portfolios as well.

It was reported that correspondents will not be allowed to cover the meeting between Rabin, Peres, and 'Arafat. No reason was given for this decision.

Rabin, Peres Agree on New Ambassador to Jordan

TA1602065295 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres have agreed to appoint Professor Shim'on Shamir as Israel's ambassador to Jordan. Rabin and Peres, who met today through the mediation of Giyora 'Eyni, discussed a series of political issues, but it is not clear whether they agreed on the appointments to the Interior and Religious Affairs Ministries. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Prof. Shim'on Shamir will be Israel's first ambassador to Jordan. This was concluded by the prime minister and foreign minister. Prof. Shamir served as Israel's ambassador to Egypt and as head of the Shiloah Institute. Among the figures mentioned as possible candidates for the post were Foreign Ministry official Yosi Gal, who will apparently be appointed Israel's ambassador to the Netherlands, and the Mosad's Efrayim Halevi, who may be appointed to another post in the Israeli foreign service.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, addressing the Knesset plenum several minutes ago, still refrained from announcing the appointment officially:

[Peres] As for the appointment of the ambassador to Jordan, I hope this will be done by the end of the week. I only want to remind you that the United States, which is a bigger country, has left us without an ambassador for almost a year. We will not have such a situation. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Netanyahu Backs Government Refusal To Sign NPT

TA1602072795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu has said that he supports the government's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. On this issue there is no opposition or coalition, Netanyahu said, and it is important to let everybody know that the Israeli people is united.

Editorial: Egyptian Ban 'Totalitarian' Measure

TA1602124495 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Egypt Bans 'THE JERUSALEM POST'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egypt's ban on THE JERUSALEM POST is perhaps the saddest commentary on Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres's vision of "The New Middle East." It was Egypt, the leading Arab country, that raised expectations of a new era in Arab-Israeli relations by signing a peace treaty with Israel 15 years ago. And it is on Egypt that the government has relied to serve as a bridge to the Arab world. Even those who believe that the root cause of the conflict is the Palestinian problem realize that only Egypt can lead the Arab regimes to accept Israel as an integral part of the region. Clearly, the dream of a new Middle East cannot be realized without Egypt.

It is clear, too, that Egypt's role as leader and conciliator cannot be divorced from its pro-Western orientation and political character. An Egypt ruled by a radical, ruthless dictator like Hafiz al-Asad, Saddam Husayn or Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi could hardly perform the function of peacemaker; nor could it bridge the gap between Moslem and Jew if it strayed into the world of Islamic fanaticism and militancy.

That is why the use of totalitarian measures against a newspaper critical of Egyptian policies is so shocking. The banning of a paper is after all, one of the most severe insults to democratic tenets. (Not that Egypt is a democracy; it is not. But it does profess to be striving for democratic values and greater freedom.)

Compounding the felony, the ban on the POST was triggered not by an alleged falsehood or libel, but by an opinion piece—an article by one of Israel's most distinguished diplomats, former ambassador to the UN Yehuda Blum.

The article blames the current difficulties in Egypt-Israel relations—the tensions Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has described as "the ill wind blowing in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry"—on three shapers of Egyptian policies: former foreign minister (now secretary general of the Arab League) 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, the current Foreign 'Amr Musa and Mubarak's closest adviser, 'Usamah al- Baz.

The worst of Blum's charges is that they were known as "skeptics, if not outright opponents" of the Israel-Egypt peace process. That they are the ones who form Egyptian policies, says Blum, is indicative of Mubarak's "general course vis-a-vis Israel."

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It may be that the personalized nature of the criticism so offended the official mentioned that they decided to punish the POST. But it is difficult to escape the impression that the banning was precipitated by more profound reasons. Egypt has obviously assumed a hostile stance in its relations with Israel. Its efforts to undermine Israel's relations with Arab and African countries, and its insistence on Israel's signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is tantamount to demanding that Israel should be allowed to exist only at the mercy of its neighbors, raises suspicions even among the most dedicated Israeli doves. It is precisely on this kind of deterrence that those who advocate withdrawal from the territories rely to compensate for indefensible borders.

It is these Egyptian policies that made Peres, a staunch pro- Egyptian, shout at Musa, at Blair House last week that Egypt was destroying the peace process. According to the NEW YORK TIMES, the shouting match began when Musa, as if trying to affirm Blum's charges, accused Israel not only of starting the 1967 war, but of wanting to dominate the Middle East with its nuclear weapons. Clearly, the "ill-wind" was not calmed at the historic Israel- Jordan-PLO-Egypt Cairo summit.

It would be comforting to believe that the various international associations of journalists, the myriad human rights groups and the world's democratic governments—not to mention Israel's own Foreign Ministry—will protest the ban on THE JERUSALEM POST. It is to be hoped, too, that Jewish organizations in the U.S., led by AIPAC, which have always lobbied for American aid to Egypt, will reexamine their position.

Egypt has been handsomely rewarded by the U.S. for its pro- Western tilt—not only with annual grants but the cancellation of a $7 billion debt. Such support can only be justified if Egypt truly pursues peace and democratization. If it chooses to undermine Israel, get closer to al-Qadhdhafi and adopt the totalitarian tactics of the worst Arab dictatorships, there is little reason to consider it a beacon of hope and progress in the Middle East.

Ecuador, Peru Envoys Deny Israelis in Clashes

TA1402153495 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 14 Feb 95 p 2

[Report by Efrayim Davidi]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Peruvian military source told an AFP correspondent two days ago that Ecuadoran pilots flying Israeli-made Kfir jet fighters are being assisted by either Israeli aid or mercenaries who even fly the planes.

"The radars on the Kfirs enable the quick detection of every enemy missile, whereupon the pilots release decoys to attract the missiles," the source said.

On Sunday [12 February] Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori announced that two Ecuadoran Air Force planes had been shot down by his country's antiaircraft forces in the valley of the Cenepa River near the area disputed by the two South American countries. According to him, one was a Kfir and the other was a U.S.-made A-37.

An Ecuadoran Army spokesman denied Fujimori's allegations: "No Ecuadoran Air Force plane has been shot down, although antiaircraft fire was initiated near Cueva de los Tayos." The spokesman confirmed that one of the planes had been hit by the fire, "but all the planes have returned safely to their base."

Jorge Prieto, the consul at the Peruvian Embassy in Tel Aviv, denied the report. "We maintain excellent relations with the State of Israel and its people. I do not know of any Israeli assistance to the aggressor's side, the Ecuadoran Army."

Nevertheless, he added, "there may be Israeli mercenaries fighting on Ecuador's side, but if there are, they are doing so of their own volition and not as part of Israel's foreign policy."

He added: "The Peruvian Army is strong and does not need foreign reinforcements. We conduct our defense by ourselves, without any external assistance."

Paulina Garcia de Larrea, Ecuador's ambassador in Israel, said: "The news agency report is part of an anti-Ecuadoran campaign aimed at discrediting my motherland and its army. This campaign was engineered by the Lima government." According to her, "the report is totally unfounded. The Ecuadoran Army has no mercenaries or foreign soldiers."

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Al-Kabariti on Cairo Summit, Other Issues

NC1502163895 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 12 Feb 95 p 7

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti by Sana' al-Sa'id; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Sa'id] The Arab public has not felt the achievements of the four-way summit in Cairo. Or do we regard the meeting itself as the achievement?

[Al-Kabariti] Regardless of the final results the achievement was represented by the four parties affirming their commitment in letter and spirit to implementing the agreements concluded among them. This is important, especially when we know that Israel is not committed to the implementation, certainly not on the Palestinian track. [passage omitted]

Real peace means comprehensive peace and the starting point for comprehensive peace is a balanced and fair settlement that makes the Palestinian people feel that their legitimate rights have been secured on the basis of international legitimacy's resolutions.

[Al-Sa'id] But this balance is lacking when you condemn the Palestinian terrorism and turn a blind eye to Israel's terrorism, is it not?

[Al-Kabariti] We condemn the principle of resorting to any method that uses violence, terrorism, and compulsion to achieve the political objectives of any party. In this context I say we cannot regard Israel's siege and separation of the Palestinian territories and its refusal to halt settlement-building as anything but a violation of every charter and every one of international legitimacy's resolutions.

[Al-Sa'id] One of your faults in Syria's view is your disregard for coordination with it and the speeding up of normalization with Israel, is it not?

[Al-Kabariti] From the Syrian point of view the aim of coordination was to benefit from Syria's resources, strength, and influence to enable the Arab countries to achieve their rights. If we take this view and apply it, we see that the coordination that preceded the Oslo Agreement achieved its objective. The Palestinians reached an agreement through it. True, this agreement has not achieved the desired balance and fairness but it was the most that could be achieved under the prevailing conditions and developments. Following the signing of the Oslo Agreement, Jordan had to think of its interests and of the dangers that could threaten its rights and sovereignty as a result of the signing of the Palestinian agreement. So we acted. Our action might have been quicker than our brothers expected but we had to take anticipatory action against the possibility of Israel exploiting the existing conditions and developments to undermine our rights. We succeeded, thanks be to God, in wresting our rights in full without any security measures or arrangements on the border with Israel.

[Al-Sa'id] Can Jordan not undertake an initiative toward Syria to bridge the gap between the two countries?

[Al-Kabariti] We support the Syrian stance and its legitimate principles for retrieving all its territories. But if Syria feels that contacts with Jordan at this stage do not serve its objectives, then that is up to it. We have an ambassador in Syria and we regard our relations as being normal. Our stance on Syria is firm, unchanged, and unchangeable.

[Al-Sa'id] Is it true that Jordan's keys are now in Israeli hands, as some people claim?

[Al-Kabariti] Jordan's keys are in its own hands. Had this not been true, Jordan would not have succeeded in safeguarding its independent decisionmaking or in reaching an even-handed agreement with Israel, an agreement the balance of which does not necessarily reflect the imbalance of forces between Jordan and Israel.

[Al-Sa'id] What is your specific position on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty? Do you agree with Egypt's views that Israel should sign the Treaty first as a condition for your signing it?

[Al-Kabariti] I think this issue must be proposed at the next meeting of the Arab League's new session. We in Jordan desire a unified stance on the Treaty, on signing it, and on the period of its renewal, whether definite or indefinite. Jordan's stance is firm and, proceeding from our national constants, we included in the Jordanian-Israeli Agreement a clause providing for the creation of a zone free of conventional and nonconventional weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East within the framework of a fair and comprehensive peace. I would like to stress here that our stance is consistent with Egypt's regarding the need for Israel to commit itself to signing the Treaty. But eventually our efforts must be unified and coordinated with the United States and all members of the international community that can pressure Israel to make its nuclear program subject to international supervision.

[Al-Sa'id] There is no pressure on Israel; it is on the Arab countries. I would like to ask here: Was Jordan not subjected to U.S. pressure?

[Al-Kabariti] What kind of pressure?

[Al-Sa'id] For example, it was said that the Jordanian-Israeli Agreement was concluded under U.S. pressure within the context of an integrated deal involving financial aid.

[Al-Kabariti] Efforts by Jordanian officials led to this even- handed agreement between Israel and Jordan. Reaching this agreement was based on a Jordanian strategy and stance, not on economic deals or U.S. pressure. True, we admit that we in Jordan suffer from problems and that Jordan came under pressure, such as the siege [of al-'Aqabah port], which was equivalent to the blockade imposed on Iraq. All these factors paved the way for emerging from the status quo to enable

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Jordan to maintain its national dignity and independence and, at the same time, guarantee its sons' future. These factors must have contributed to the final decision to sign the agreement.

[Al-Sa'id] In light of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown's tour and the economic meeting in Taba among the Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli delegations, I would like to ask: Is discussion of the economic issues premature?

[Al-Kabariti] No, it is not premature. We believe that the economic issues must be discussed in tandem with the peace process so that the Arab citizen may feel that the international community genuinely supports peace and not only our recognition of Israel and formal normalization of ties with it. The economic and social benefits that we believe must be achieved should be considered, otherwise the peace process will not continue.

Cabinet Sends House Bill Ending Israel Boycott

JN1602111095 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Feb 95 pp 1, 26

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-DUSTUR—Yesterday, the Prime Ministry passed to the House of Representatives a 1995 bill on the economic boycott of, and ban on dealing with, the enemy. The bill was justified as follows:

In implementation of Law No. 14 of 1994 (the law endorsing the peace treaty) and since the purpose of the legislation that bans dealings with Israel in particular is no longer valid, this bill shall nullify the relevant laws, which are:

—Law No. 30 of 1973 banning the sale of real estate to Israel.
—Uniform Law No. 10 of 1958 on the boycott of Israel.
—Law No. 66 of 1953 banning trade with Israel.

Since the Jordanian laws in force do not set guidelines on economic boycotts and on banning dealings with the enemy, except for the laws on dealing with Israel—which was considered a hostile state—this bill is meant to set guidelines for the boycott and for dealing with the enemy, whenever the situation warrants. The bill gives the Council of Ministers the right to declare an economic boycott on any party or deem a party to be hostile.

The following is the text of the bill:

Article I: This law shall be called (Law on Economic Boycott and Banning Dealing With the Enemy of 1995) and shall go into effect on the date it is published in the Official Gazette.

Article II: A. Regardless of any other laws, the Council of Ministers has the right to deem any state, party, or person hostile to the Kingdom and to ban dealing with it in accordance with the provisions of this law.
B. The Council of Ministers may, according to guidelines which it issues, specify the items that are not allowed to be traded with parties hostile to the Kingdom. It may also specify the items covered under the ban and the conditions and restrictions on this trade and the exclusions.

Article III: According to guidelines which it issues, the Council of Ministers may announce a full or partial boycott of any state, party, or person and define the limits of a boycott, the items it includes, the conditions and restrictions related to it, as well as the exclusions.

Article IV: The decisions and guidelines issued in accordance with the provisions of Articles II and III of this law shall by published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect on the date specified by the Council of Ministers.

Article V: The prime minister may appoint a guardian of the movable and immovable property which exists in the Kingdom and belongs to a hostile party. The tasks and powers of this guardian, as well as the guidelines and measures that concern the safekeeping and disposal of this property and expenses or funds for this property, shall be defined in accordance with guidelines to be issued under this law.

Article VI: Anyone who violates the guidelines of a boycott and ban stipulated in Articles II and III of this law shall be penalized by temporary hard labor or a fine of not less than 1,000 dinars and not more than 10,000 dinars or both. The materials used in the crime shall also be confiscated.

Article VII: The following laws and their amendments shall be nullified:
A. Law No. 30 of 1973 on selling real estate to the enemy.
B. Law No. 10 of 1958 on the boycott of Israel.
C. Law No. 66 of 1953 banning trade with Israel.

Article VIII: The Council of Ministers may issue the necessary guidelines to implement the provisions of this law.

Article IX: The prime minister and the ministers shall implement the provisions of this law.

King Discusses Pursuit of Comprehensive Peace

JN1602115895 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16-17 Feb 95 pp 1, 7

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—His Majesty King Husayn has stressed that the Kingdom will persevere in its pursuit of Mideast peace as the only alternative for the whole region despite difficulties facing other tracks of Arab negotiations with Israel.

Speaking to represenatives of the foreign press Tuesday evening, King Husayn warned that "forces of darkness" are trying to destroy the peace process through acts of violence but said that Jordan will do all it can to prevent them from achieving their goals.

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"(These times are) time of promise...and consolidation of what has been achieved" through the peace process and extremists should not be allowed to jeopardise these achievements because the majority of the people want peace, King Husayn told reporters at the Ma'wa Palace.

The King said the divide that used to separate the Arabs and Israel has been replaced by a new divide between the opponents and proponents of peace.

"We are disturbed when opponents of peace, the extremists, create conditions which jeopardise what (has been) achieved. There is the camp of peace, one that is comprehensive and promising, and the camp of those who would like to destroy it," the King said.

While saying that conditions "of hunger, despair and anger" might lead to violence, the King said that "acts of violence are perpetuated by organisations."

"It is not the right of those who perpetuate acts of violence" to claim that they are the only Muslims, the King said.

"I believe it is our duty to distance ourselves from those who distort the image of Islam," the King said.

Reiterating the Kingdom's commitment to the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel, King Husayn said Jordan is looking at ways to speed up "progress in country ... in line with the peace treaty."

"We will live up to the peace treaty in word and deed," the King said, adding that peace is the only alternative, not only for Jordan but also for others in the region.

King Husayn noted that it was significant that the treaty also has the support of the majority in Israel, saying that its conclusion contributed to the strengthening of forces of peace in the Jewish state.

But, the King said, the difficulties facing the Palestinian-Israeli talks are negatively affecting supporters of peace in Israel.

"I have a feeling that those sticking their necks out for peace (in Israel) have challenges ... I hope they will succeed," said the Monarch.

Addressing concerns by some that peace has been slow to bring about the desired changes, His Majesty said that after 47 years of "disaster and instability changes will take time to materialise.

On the controversial issue of "normalisation" with Israel, King Husayn questioned the basis of the concept of cold peace, saying that Jordan will not force anybody to normalise ties with Israel but those who oppose it should not be able to prevent others from doing so.

"Peace opens the doors for people to see the human face of the other," the King said.

He said achieving the economic prosperity that people expected from peace would require that Jordanians and Israelis deal with each other to realise the economic opportunities of the new era.

The King said he hoped Syria and Lebanon will be able to achieve progress on their tracks of the negotiations with Israel, noting that all parties to the peace talks started from the same point and Jordan reached the peace treaty with Israel "because it felt the need, the urgency and the right to move."

There was a will and a determination to move towards peace, the King told the reporters during the meeting, which was attended by Her Majesty Queen Nur, Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir, members of the royal family and other officials.

The King said that "Syria is very, very important in the area," and the comprehensive peace that the Kingdom seeks on the basis of U.N. resolutions 338 and 242 would require that Syria too reaches peace with Israel.

But the deteriorating situation in the West Bank and Gaza was worrying to the King even though he said his view is not the "dark" one adopted by some newspapers' columnists.

"We are worried and concerned about conditions" in the occupied territories and at the Palestinian-Israeli track of the negotiations, the King said, expressing hope that difficulties will be overcome.

But King Husayn said that he will not apportion blame on one party for the difficulties facing the negotiations.

"Taking a totally negative attitude cannot help" improve the situation and both sides "have a problem, have a responsibility to get us all off this point," His Majesty said.

"It is almost an impossible (situation) but we hope it will be solved," King Husayn told reporters.

The King said "the violence that is occurring" is defeating the purpose of having the interim period between the initial and final negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians prepare the people psychologically for the final status.

But King Husayn said Jordan will not interfere in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. "Jordan has no place in this issue because it is a Palestinian issue and the Palestinan leadership is dealing with it."

The King said nothing can hurt Jordanian-Palestinian relations more than "even the suggestion" of the Kingdom interfering in the affairs of the Palestinians.

The King said he has made it clear to all concerned that the Kingdom will not discuss the form of the final relationship with the Palestinians before they are able, under conditions of freedom, to choose what they want.

The King said that Jordan has no ambitions outside its territory and "if the Hashemites had ambitions, they would not have ended up where they are now."

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However, King Husayn stressed the special role the Kingdom has had in Jerusalem, saying there would have been no end to accusations against the Kingdom had its treaty with Israel not included a reference to the Holy City.

The King said that Jerusalem is "very, very important to us, sensitive to us all, particularly here in Jordan (as it was) part of the territory that our forces defended in 48, 49 and 67."

The King said that the Kingdom has "no wish to play the role of others" in Jerusalem, saying that the Kingdom's custodianship of the holy sites in the city is in line with international legitimacy.

The King stressed that a renunciation of the Kingdom's role in Jerusalem would be very dangerous before the final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are completed. Jordan will end its role there when the Palestinians are in a position to take control of the holy sites in the city, he said.

The Monarch added that Jerusalem's holy shrines should not be part of political sovereignty and must be "given a status above all that." "This is the only approach that can work," a the King said.

Expressing hope that Jordan's democratic march can be a positive influence in the region, King Husayn reiterated commitment to democracy and respect of the law in the country.

But the King said he feared for "democracy from those who profess to be democrats."

Responding to a question, the King said that a visit by a number of opposition parties to Syria late last month is being looked into to see if it violated the law.

During their visit, the leaders of the eight leftist and pan-Arabist parties criticised Jordan for signing the peace treaty with Israel and praised the Syria position is the only strong one against Israeli plans to dominate the region.

The visit was severly criticised by mainstream Jordanian politicians and observers who accused the parties of playing into the hands of a foreign regime.

Responding to a question on the modernisation of the armed forces, the King said it is urgent to modernise the army in order to deter threats, "physical or indirect," that may face the country, protect its commitments and counter terrorism, as well as participating in U.N. peacekeeping missions.

The Kingdom "will always have a regional role to play," King Husayn told reporters.

His Majesty reiterated his concern over the plight of the Iraqi people saying that the "government notwithstanding, our feelings are for the Iraqi people."

But the King said Jordan, which never supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and sought to solve the conflict through ending the occupation, has not been able to influence Iraq.

The King said that Jordan was not involved in any Israeli-Iraqi talks "if" the two countries were indeed in contact.

JVA To Take Charge of Building al-Yarmuk Dam

JN1402083895 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (Petra)—Jordan and Israel on Monday agreed to have the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) to carry out work related to designing and building a dam in al-'Adasiyeh area on the al-Yarmuk River, the head of the Jordanian side to the Jordanian-Israeli water committee said.

Munther Haddadin also said the Israeli government would pay its share in establishing the dam, which will be used to divert Jordan's and Israel's shares of the al-Yarmuk River water.

Dr. Haddadin said the committee, which met in the Israeli town of Beasan, discussed designs for the dam which the two sides agreed to build in accordance with the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The committee also discussed means of storing water on the River Jordan and adjacent valleys. It was agreed that the Jordanian government will take charge of the project and as such will have to invite representatives of the European Union (EU) to prepare tenders from consultants to conduct feasibility studies, Dr. Haddadin said.

He said a joint Jordanian-Israeli committee would cooperate with the EU through providing the relevant information on the project.

Dr. Haddadin said the EU had expressed readiness to offer Jordan a grant to conduct studies on water projects carried out as part of the peace treaty. He said the EU's desire was expressed following a European tour by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan last November.

The joint Jordanian-Israeli committee also discussed means of pumping water from the Jordan Valley to Jordanian cities for drinking purposes and pumping water from the Israeli pipelines in the north to the King Abdallah Canal in Jordan.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is about to offer tender documents on the project.

The committee will next meet in Tiberias in Israel to discuss costs of pumping water from the Tiberias Lake to the King 'Abdallah Canal. These costs will be shouldered by Jordan alone in implementation of the peace treaty.

The Jordanian negotiating team returned to Amman Monday evening after the conclusion of the seven-hour meeting.

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Hizballah Marks Iran Revolution Jubilee

MM1502140495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p2

[Unattributed report on Hizballah Party rally to mark the 16th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution and the third anniversary of the assassination of the party's Secretary General Shaykh 'Abbas al-Musawi, at al-Ghabiri in Lebanon on 12 February: "Al-Shiqaqi, Secretary General of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, Tells the Commemoration Ceremony: 'The Peace of Regimes Does Not Bind the Peoples'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-HAYAH—The Hizballah Party yesterday commemorated the 16th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the third anniversary of the assassination of the party's Secretary General Shaykh 'Abbas al-Musawi and Shaykh Raghib Harb at a public rally attended by political, spiritual, and military dignitaries.

The rally was opened by President of the Shiite Supreme Islamic Council Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din. He saluted the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeyni. He said that "the arena of the greater confrontation now centers on normalization and the resistance has been carrying out its duties in destabilizing the enemy." He added that "combating normalization is not the responsibility of the resistance inasmuch as it is the responsibility of the nation, its societies, and its leaderships and was not confined to just one party, one movement or one current." He called for "preparation to enter the battle and getting ready for a battle that does not need arms but organization and understanding among the various forces."

He addressed the Arab world saying: "It is impossible for normal relations to exist between us and Israel. For it is impossible for relations to exist between the wolf and the lamb. All relations with Israel are illegitimate." He added that: "The resistance represents the remaining living line that expresses life, which is expressed by nothing else other than the resistance. All attempts to contain it, influence it, and disarm it under the slogan of terrorism and other slogans are bound to end in failure and will not succeed." He stressed that "the resistance will not stop until it accomplishes its objective." He called for the exertion of efforts, and not to despair about working for the restoration of the Arab edifice to face the Zionist plan in its entirety.

Shaykh Faysal al-Mawlawi, secretary general of "Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah" [The Islamic Grouping], also addressed the rally. He pointed out that the West and the United States toppled the Soviet Union by speeding up the deterioration of economic conditions so as to strike at the society's structure from within.

He called on Iran "to improve its economic and financial capabilities so as to be able to face up to the Western pressures which aim at aborting the Islamic experiment in the world."

He was followed by Fathi al-Shaqaqi, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, who said that "the resistance has not weakened and has not ended, but has indeed escalated its operations, during the three years that followed the assassination of 'Abbas [al-Musawi], by whose assassination the enemy sought to break our backs and deal a strong blow to the Islamic resistance in Lebanon and Palestine."

He said that "the Hizballah Party has become an Arab and Islamic Party as large as the region and now plays a prominent regional role which some countries have failed to play. It is the party through which and over the glitter of whose victories the nation lives in spite of the negations of the repudiators."

Al-Shaqaqi then criticized "the Arabs' collapse in front of the invaders [the Israelis] and their bringing them into the Arab capitals," affirming that "the accords concluded by the regimes with the enemy do not bind the peoples." He added that "the small camp whose children's bones used to be crushed by the enemy has now become a strategic threat to the security of the enemy as (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq) Rabin himself has said. This is because this small camp now produces the martyrs who counterbalance the enemy with their terror."

He said that "the martyr operations are the proof that the nation is alive; and there is no source of terrorism in the world like that of the U.S. Administration and the Zionist entity. For they refuse to see us raise our voices and defend ourselves, and if we do so, they brand us with terrorism, while this U.S. Administration ignores the murdering and massacring of peoples and does not describe the blowing up of the Sufayr quarter, for example, as an act of terrorism."

He affirmed that "the Jihad will continue in Palestine because our cause is a just one and the enemy will not be able to stop the Jihad and martyrdom, even if it were to seek the help of the Oslo group for achieving this end. For (Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority Yasir) 'Arafat and Rabin are now moving toward a dead end, and the collapse of one of them will lead to the collapse of the other.

"We do not accept 'Arafat's offering of our flesh to Rabin," he affirmed, "and we warn against persistence with the criminal game. What remains of the life of 'Arafat and their lives will not be long enough for them in their fight against the Islamic Jihad and Hamas and their clashes with the Mujahidin."

Al-Shaqaqi was followed by Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Hamayon Ali Zada [as transliterated], who spoke about the meaning of revolution, the values of Islam, and the regime that was established by Khomeyni, which stands for the defense of the oppressed and the belittled in the world against the oppression, arrogance, and materialism that dominates the world and which is based on the preservation of the Islamic Awakening Movement. He added: "From the size of the colossal and

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sharp attacks that are waged by the world's arrogance, politically, militarily, and informationally, and the position it [the movement] now occupies in the minds of the enemies, their words, their policies and their planning, we can easily deduce that this Islamic Awakening Movement has become the choice of the peoples in the present as well as in the future. This choice has been continuing and crystallizing in all parts of the World, in forms compatible with the special conditions that characterize that area.

"The scenes that daily take place before the eyes of the world in occupied Palestine, and the extent of the might and greatness they have acquired, so that the enemy can no longer to cover them up—are they not part of this roaring river? Are not the epics written by the valiant, heroic, and faithful youth of the Islamic resistance, in every corner of the sacred land in the South [Southern Lebanon] and the Western Biqa', mere glittering samples from the roaring noble Islamic sea, which has robbed the enemy's eyes of all sleep?"

He drew attention to the fact that "following his weakness and inability to face Islam and the might of the Islamic nation, directly and openly, the enemy cunningly resorted to expressing his hostility through covert disguises such as combating fundamentalism, extremism, violence, and terrorism." He spoke of the distorted picture which the West has been trying to give about Islam and the Islamic Movement on the international level and said that "this attempt will not detract one iota from the significance of this liberation movement and its sublime values."

He said that the days of the frivolous and hollow Quixotic American acts particularly before the Muslim Iranian people have gone for good. He spoke of the reasons that prompt the Western information media to concentrate on the failure of the Islamic experiment in Iran despite the huge achievements and great successes it has scored. He then reviewed these accomplishments.

Secretary General of the Hizballah Party Hasan Nasrallah followed. He began by speaking about the Iranian revolution and Islam, "which routed the shah's regime in Iran, brought down the policeman of the Gulf, and expelled the United States from the land that abounded with experiences, resources, and human and material capabilities.... The revolution has triumphed and a state of the people and institutions that are in harmony with the people's aspiration have been established. It has stood fast and did not bend before any pressure."

He pointed out that "the Iranian revolution did not end with the departure of Khomeyni," adding that "the arrogant and despotic world should give up betting on changing the Islamic regime in Iran, as the new members of the U.S. House of Representatives have been asking." He said: "When we come to Lebanon we find that the resistance there was also the work of Islam and likewise the martyr Jihad resistance in Palestine is also the work of Islam. It still gathers within its ranks thousands of strugglers, resistance fighters, and martyrdom-seekers who have not been deterred by starvation, murder, stabbing in the back, despair, or frustration or succumbed to threats or promises."

He declared that Hizballah in Lebanon and the struggler members of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Palestine and all the Jihad forces do not act in their movement on the orders of Iran or Syria but of Islam, their religion, and their humanity. Thus what defines their course, destiny, limits, and controls are the concepts they emanated from.

He said that "there is no reason for accusing Iran of terrorism and for keeping Syria on the list of the countries that support terrorism. As far as Syria is concerned, its entire sin is that it still permits some strugglers to live in peace in its capital. America's supply of capabilities and support to the Israeli oppression and terrorism which kills a people and destroys a nation, is not counted as terrorism."

He said: "The Americans and Israelis alike should understand that the only way they can topple us is not by exerting pressure on Iran and Syria but only by extricating faith, commitment, and sincerity from our hearts and minds and from the souls of our strugglers. And this is something they can never do because we have pledged to God, our nation, and our martyrs and our late Imam [Khomeyni], our struggler leader, our great martyrs and all the honorable people, the sincere and the strugglers to continue on the road."

He said that "the United States can do anything that it can achieve by its capabilities. But it will not be able to extricate this faith and this spirit from us. The United States which has the power to open all issues, will not be able to frighten or intimidate us by any measure or any resolution it seeks to take. On this anniversary, we say to America and to Israel: We are apostles, brothers and comrades of 'Abbas al-Musawi and all of us are lovers of death and martyrdom."

The rally ended with a speech delivered by the Ulema Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, who began by reviewing the meaning of the Iranian revolution and the role of Imam Khomeyni, referring to the American attempts to isolate and weaken Iran. He said: "Thus the White House incumbent has begun to talk of imposing a siege around Iran and about the need to destroy the base of the overwhelming fundamentalism in Iran so that we can destroy this fundamentalism. The war is still on. Thus we see that he rushes to place on the list of terrorism any force that rises to safeguard the nation and its vehemence, as he has done with Syria. The new war has begun in Bosnia and NATO has entered it. He [Clinton] has also supported the high-handed stand taken by Russia against the Chechens."

Ulema Fadlallah reiterated his understanding and concept of fundamentalism and addressed the West saying: "You might have succeeded in toppling communism but

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you will not be able to topple the Islamic activist, because he moves from one stage to another by his might."

Fadlallah went on to say that "due to all the arguments we have become entangled in and all the talk about normalization and the rejection of normalization, we have begun to make concessions. For we have forgotten about Palestine and began to talk about the occupied territories and normalization.

"Let the voice of the Islamists, the nationalists, and the pan- Arabists be one. Let us say to the world: You might have bestowed legitimacy on Israel, but we do not believe in its legitimacy, neither that of 1948 nor that of the 1967. Thus the two dear strugglers in Netanya acted on the basis that they were in their land and not on the basis of harming a legitimate state. For, like all the aged, women, and children of Palestine, they consider the land to be theirs. So the issue is that there is an illegitimate state trying to annul all our legitimacy, and there is an American position which wants to use this position to contain all our conditions."

Concluding, he said: "We are a nation that can harm America in its economy. I am not raising the slogan of imposing a total boycott of the United States. But how about fighting America in its cigarettes and soft drinks and in the clothes and cosmetics you wear. Then America will respect you. America respects the Jews because they pressure it in the fields of economy and information. They believe in their Jewish racism as a means that penetrates all the spheres they move in. Their Judaism is what determines their relations and treaties with the world. Why should not our Arabism and Islam and all the other names we have devised determine our relations and destiny? This world only respects the strong. We have the strength of our people in Palestine and Lebanon as well as in many other places in the Islamic world."

President Briefs Cabinet on Summit in Damascus

NC1502134695 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Statement by Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr following cabinet meeting in Beirut on 15 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The cabinet held its regular weekly meeting today. His Excellency the president opened the session and briefed the cabinet about the meeting of the Higher Lebanese-Syrian Council held in Damascus on Saturday and Sunday [11 and 12 February]. He informed the cabinet of the resolutions adopted by the Higher Council and the discussions that were held on the sidelines of the Higher Council meeting.

His Excellency the president then referred to the EU troika delegation's visit to Lebanon and Europe's willingness to play a helpful role in the peace process and also to extend economic aid to Mediterranean countries. The president briefed the ministers on his talks with the EU troika delegation.

The cabinet then discussed the 49 items on its agenda, most of which were approved, and appropriate decisions were made about them. Discussion of a few other items, no more than seven or eight, was postponed until further meetings. [passage omitted]

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Arab League Chief Meets al-Asad, Leaves for Lebanon

JN1502170395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1215 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, along with Ahmad 'Adil, the Arab League's assistant secretary general. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar'.

The conferees discussed developments in the Arab homeland, challenges facing the Arab nation, and the role the Arab League could play in this respect. The Arab League secretary general expressed appreciation for Syria's pan-Arab stands and continued support for the Arab League and joint Arab action in the interest of pan-Arab issues.

The Arab League secretary general and his delegation left Damascus this afternoon for Lebanon at the conclusion of a three-day visit to Syria. He was seen off by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Radio: Peace Process 'Dimmed,' 'Likely to Collapse'

JN1502153595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Chances for peace in the Middle East have dimmed. This makes observers wonder if the peace process is heading for total collapse. This is because the peace process has departed from the foundations and objectives that were set at the Madrid conference, thanks to the Israeli rulers' intransigence and insistence on bypassing the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

Instead of mobilizing efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel has followed a policy of separate and deceptive deals. It did so not because those deals would bring the region any closer to the desired peace, but because those deals consolidate the occupation of Arab territories and give a free hand to the Zionist settlers in confiscating more lands, expanding settlements, and creating a fait accompli.

Israel has covered this approach—which contradicts the principles of the Madrid conference—with security pretexts. Thus, it imposed on the Palestinian side the distorted, truncated Oslo accord and made this side aim its guns at the chests of the people after each operation by the national resistance. The Palestinian people insist on removing occupation, restoring their lands and holy shrines, and exercising their right to self- determination.

Israeli rulers have publicly acknowledged that the Oslo accord has not provided security for Israel. They blamed the self-rule authority for its failure, as they say, to strike at terrorism, by which they mean national resistance and the right to self-defense.

No two observers would disagree that the Oslo accord has failed miserably because it retained occupation and settlement activity. Security will not be provided, not today or tomorrow, in the light of occupation. Security can be provided when the occupied lands return to their owners, settlements are dismantled, settlers are evacuated, and when the Palestinian people are able to build a free future away from threats and guns aimed at their heads.

Israel's closure of the occupied territories and its speeding up of settlement activity will not change this reality. Nor will this reality be changed by an initiative from one party or another to patch up the Oslo accord. The accord has borne its own seeds of destruction since its inception. The accord did not meet the simplest ambitions of the Palestinian people for freedom and self-determination. But it did respond fully to all Israel's conditions and dictates.

The peace process has departed from its principles, goals, and course since the signing of the Oslo accord. Not a single day passes without observing further obstructions and failures. Hence, reviving this process and removing the obstacles in its way cannot be done by patching it up, making hollow and high-faluting statements, and holding meetings to no avail. This can be done by reembracing its principles and goals, primarily the objective of the just and comprehensive peace for which Syria has consistently called. A just and comprehensive peace requires the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, as a prelude to Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories and the return to the pre-4 June 1967 lines.

Israel has deliberately sought to escape the obligations of the Security Council resolutions by citing an endless series of security pretexts and highlighting the Palestinian and Lebanese national resistance—or what it falsely and deceptively calls terrorism, since it is the apex of terrorism and has been practicing it on a large scale since its foundation.

Thus, Israel has rejected every proposal for a just and comprehensive peace. Had it responded to these proposals and withdrawn from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the West Bank, peace and security would have been prevailing now in the region. The Palestinian people are asking for no more than removing the occupation and exercising their right to self-determination; the Lebanese want only the restoration of their south; Syria wants the restoration of the Golan. Syria has sincerely and honestly responded to the peace efforts and made tremendous efforts to make them succeed. Israel, however, has derailed the peace process and refused to withdraw fully under pretexts that are not in harmony with the essence of peace. This has made peace falter. The parties that are concerned with peace should have intervened after the Oslo accord to put things back on

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track. This is because separate deals can never lead to peace, and there is no justification for Israel to resort to this approach. Security can be achieved through a just peace; but there can be no security under occupation.

The chances for peace in the Middle East have dimmed. Thus, the immense efforts made over the past years are likely to collapse. Therefore, there is an urgent need to end the dilemma through which the peace process is going. This can only be done by reaffirming the foundations of peace as agreed upon in Madrid and by calling on Israel to withdraw fully from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the rest of the occupied territories, in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy, in affirmation of the rule of international law, and in cancellation of the law of the jungle.

Commentary: Oslo Accord Leads to 'Killing' of Peace

JN1502205295 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1907 GMT 15 Feb 95

["Behind the News" commentary by Yusuf Maqdisi; read by Raja Farzali]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. The meetings held following the Oslo or the Gaza-Jericho agreement between Israel and the PLO are amazingly numerous. These meetings have almost been held daily. They were held in more than one place—in the region, in Europe, and in the United States.

The source of our amazement is not the number of these meetings, but the results of these meetings. Each point in this agreement branched into several points, each explanation of this agreement gave birth to other interpretations and explanations and resulted in optimistic statements, pessimistic statements, or in statements with mixed feelings. However, what was really realized has been no more than appointing a Palestinian prison guard at the side of the Israeli prison guard and bringing more repression and terror to bear on the intifadah in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which have been living in an extreme state of siege, under the pretext that this collective punishment might provide security for Israel and limit strikes—of what the Israeli leaders call terror—directed at Israel's depth.

Naturally, the Oslo partners do not ask themselves why the intifadah has continued and escalated and why the authority of the limited self-rule finds itself living in stifling isolation, day after day. They do not ask themselves this question because they would be forced to admit that the road they followed from Madrid and the Washington talks was not the one that leads to peace. Instead, it leads to the killing of the peace by killing the intifadah and annihilating its aims of ending the Israeli occupation and realizing self-determination for the Palestinian people.

The Oslo partners have not emphasized Israel's renunciation of the occupied territory, the removal of the settlements from them, or holding free elections after the withdrawal of the Israeli army, nor its redeployment to new positions in order to pounce on the intifadah. The Oslo partners have done nothing of the sort because they abandoned the Madrid's terms of reference and met in the corridors of Oslo when they found themselves face to face with the need to approve the right of the Palestinian people to their homeland, territory, and self-determination. Their main concern was to provide security for the Israeli occupation under the cover of a limited self-rule which keeps the territory and sovereignty in Israel's hand and denies them to the Palestinians.

Despite the ceremonies that accompanied the Oslo agreement, portraying it as an embodiment of peace, nobody believed the trick because the land remained under occupation, rights plundered, and the limited self-rule police became subservient to the occupation forces in practicing repression and terror, instead of being the organized force that protects people and defends their sovereignty in the face of Israeli occupiers. In essence, the Oslo agreement is a PLO legitimization of the Israeli occupation. What is more dangerous is that the PLO renounced its aims of struggle and the intifadah was branded as terrorist because it has continued to adhere to its constant aims of liberation and the right of self-determination.

Ladies and gentlemen, we in Syria have emphasized that separate agreements will not realize just and comprehensive peace, that we neither support nor oppose the Oslo agreement because the Palestinian Arab people have the right to make their decision on the future of this agreement through their national institutions. What we emphasized has proved to be credible in reality. Syria supports a just and comprehensive peace, unlike Israel which demands partial peace that allows for its occupation and expands its domination. Israel does not want a just and comprehensive peace that realizes the land-for-peace principle and provides equal and balanced security for all. Israel wants its security to be a top priority. It wants this security to be at the expense of Arab security. It also wants to replace the concept of peace by the concept of Arab commitment to Israel's security. It wants the Arabs to renounce their political, geographic, and military security to assure Israel that there is nothing that threatens its security. They want the Arabs to recognize that the massing of sophisticated and nuclear weapons in Israel's arsenal is a legitimate thing for Israel alone, to the exclusion of others. The Arabs are banned from acquiring arms for defending themselves because, in Israel's views, they should transform their armies into police forces to protect it.

In short, Israel wants to impose a formula allowing it to have strategic supremacy over the Arabs, especially in the military field, so that the peace it seeks will be tantamount to a strategic defeat for the Arabs. This explains why Israel lured the PLO and others to separate talks and placed obstacles on the path of the U.S. initiative which regarded the implementation of the two

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UN Security Council resolutions [242 and 338] as the basis of realizing a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, following his summit meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus, President Clinton announced that the security of any side should not be realized at the expense of the security of the other side. This clearly means that peace does not mean confiscating the Arabs' security in favor of Israeli security. It does not mean that Israel should swallow any occupied Arab territory under the pretext of protecting its own security. Peace does not conform to occupation. It is not in harmony with a security that cancels the security of the other side and imposes hegemony on it.

Envoy in U.S. Views Status of Peace Process

JN1502201595 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid al-Mu'allim has said regional security and stability can only be achieved by bringing about a just and comprehensive peace, which is the policy of Syria.

In a statement to Radio Orient yesterday, he added: We do not view any meeting that does not seek to achieve a comprehensive and just peace as being part of the bases of the peace process which was unleashed in Madrid.

Al-Mu'allim said Israel has wasted many opportunities, and it is still evading the bases of the peace process which stemmed from the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. This makes us cast doubt on Israel's real intentions toward achieving a comprehensive peace in the region.

The Syrian ambassador added: Since the very beginning, we in Syria made it clear that without regaining every inch of the occupied Arab territories in the Golan and southern Lebanon, there will be no just and comprehensive peace. Al-Mu'allim pointed out that security is necessary for both the Syrian and Israeli sides, that it should be equal, and that the security of one side should not be at the expense of the other side.

He said these principles cannot be debatable, and are axiomatic principles between parties that wish to build peace between them.

On whether the United States has any ideas to activate the Syrian-Israeli negotiations, al-Mu'allim said: I have not thus far sensed such ideas. They said they have ideas, and I am still awaiting to see them. This week, we can begin to explore what these objectives [as heard] are.

Paper: There Is No Peace Without Syria, Lebanon

JN1302090795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Feb 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH has commented on the meetings of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council held under the cochairmanship of Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi, saying: The agenda of the meetings was heavy. It included all aspects of the peace process, as well as the efforts being made here and there to circumvent the terms of reference of the peace process. The agenda also included fraternal bilateral ties and the need to promote the work of bodies and institutions in the two fraternal countries in order to achieve the objectives enshrined in the Treaty of Brotherhood and Coordination and further enhance the ties of brotherhood and cooperation in all areas.

AL-BA'TH adds: The conferees underlined the various common denominators between the two countries, and the importance of promoting them, given the historical relations between the two countries and their common interests.

The paper notes that Syrian-Lebanese cooperation and coordination over the peace process has thwarted many Israeli attempts to deal with Syria and Lebanon one at a time. Moreover, the cooperation and coordination between the two countries was instrumental in strengthening their negotiating positions in the peace talks, and consequently, in halting the deterioration plaguing the Arab state of affairs.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: The fact that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations are inseparable has served to confirm an established fact; namely, that there can be no just and comprehensive peace in the region without Syria and Lebanon. For such peace to materialize, its requirements must be made available. These requirements can be summed up in Israeli compliance with the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, which provide for complete and full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-BA'TH concludes its commentary by saying that activating the Treaty of Brotherhood and Coordination between Syria and Lebanon not only serves the interests of the two countries, but also the interests of all Arabs.

For its part, the newspaper TISHRIN comments on the pretexts and claims promoted by Israel to sabotage and eliminate the peace process. In this regard, the paper notes the claims made by the Rabin government that it cannot make a tough decision abandoning the Golan, and that it can neither dismantle settlements nor evict settlers.

TISHRIN adds: These pretexts, and many others, provide cogent evidence that Israel has failed to handle the components and requirements of peace in earnest, and

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that it is not interested in the achievement of peace in the first place. This is because the achievement of just and comprehensive peace requires it to reverse its occupation so the Arabs may regain their territories and rights.

The paper goes on to say: Facts and developments in the region have shown that the deals Israel has struck with some Arab sides are far removed from the desired true, just, and comprehensive peace. As a matter of fact, these deals have only exacerbated the situation. They are now jeopardizing the peace process, because they were concluded on Israeli terms and conditions and based on separate solutions and secret negotiations.

Concluding its commentary, TISHRIN says that there can be no security in the region as long as the occupation is maintained. Peace will promote the interests of all. Given this premise, Israel is required to shed its security pretexts, reverse its occupation, abandon the policy of maneuvering and deception, and comply with the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, which provide for Israeli troop withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders to achieve just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the principle of exchanging territory for peace. Such peace is capable of addressing the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is the only peace that can ensure security and stability in the Middle East region. As for flawed and unworthy peace, it cannot achieve such an end. Syria has always been aware of this fact. That is why it has repeatedly said that a just, comprehensive, and balanced peace is achievable only when Israel effects complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Bashshar al-Asad Meets Lebanese Oppositionists

MM1302095095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 3

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Bashshar al-Asad Meets With Politicians Opposed to al-Hariri's Government"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus—Highly placed Syrian sources have told AL-HAYAH that Dr. Bashshar Hafiz al-Asad gave a fast-breaking banquet two days ago at al-Sharq club in Damascus for a number of senior Lebanese officials believed to be opposed to Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's government. They said that the meeting took place Tuesday evening and was attended by Ministers Michel Samahah, Sulayman Tony Franjiyah, and Mahmud Abu-Hamdan, and by Deputies Talal Arslan, Zahir al-Khatib, Najah Wakim, Manuel Yunis, Talal al-Mar'ibi, Istfan al-Duwayhi, Fayiz Ghusn, and Karim al-Rasi. The meeting, they said, was also attended by Phalangist Party Leader George Sa'adah and Hasan Husayn al-Husayni, son of the former Chamber of Deputies speaker. [passage omitted]

The sources said that the conferees voiced "opposition" to renewal of President al-Hirawi's term, stressing that presidential elections could be held, "but they all underscored the importance of strengthening Syrian-Lebanese coordination in the peace negotiations" with Israel.

The sources also said that the meeting was held in a "perfectly cordial atmosphere" and that Dr. Bashshar would hold other meetings in the coming days with other Lebanese officials in the context of Syrian-Lebanese "fraternal relations." [passage omitted]

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Afghanistan

Government Seizes Hekmatyar's Radio, Weapons

LD1502172395 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] After the escape of the militia from the west of Kabul, 10 tanks and heavy weapon launcher units were seized by the Islamic Army.

A source in the Armed Forces reported to the military correspondent of the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY that after clearing the west of Kabul of Golboddin [Hekmatyar]'s militia and after their escape, the mojahedin and forces of the Islamic Army have seized 30 tanks [as heard], several Russian-made tanks, several desert artillery, four BM-1 sets, one Oregan set, several anti- aircraft weapons, and a large quantity of various types of ammunition.

Instructed by Golboddin, the criminal militiamen were using these weapons to fire on the residential areas of the Kabul city, as a result of which the blood of hundreds of our innocent people had been shed. The task of transferring the seized weapons is continuing.

According to another report, the transmitting station of the so-called Radio Message of Freedom, was seized today by the forces of the Islamic Army.

Government-Backed Council Supports Taleban

LD1502190695 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Presided over by esteemed Dr. 'Abdol Hay Elahi [adviser to President Rabbani] a session of the Joint Conciliation Council of Afghanistan was held today. According to a report by the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent, in the session, the current situation of the country and conciliation efforts were discussed and the following statement was issued in this respect: The activities of the esteemed religious students' movement [Taleban], which manifest an appropriate social ground and a religious motive, are so far approvable and commendable because this movement has opened some roads and has ensured security and order in some parts of the country. As Kabul is not an ordinary province but is Afghanistan's common historical and political center, any unilateral military action against Kabul, even if it is under the cover of military-political reform will make the problem complicated. Therefore, the Joint Conciliation Council of Afghanistan asks both the esteemed students movement and the Islamic State of Afghanistan to remove the possibility of a confrontation through negotiation and constructive and profound understanding, and make a joint decision.

Taleban 'Not To Attack Kabul'

LD1502210595 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports received from Afghanistan indicate that following the capture of a base in Chahar Asiab belonging to Golboddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], the Taleban group have now also taken over the control of the Lowgar region in east of Afghanistan.

The Supervisory Council forces have managed to capture a number of significant positions around Kabul which used to be controlled by anti-government forces. The Supervisory Council have also made advances in the Chahar Asiab region.

Sources affiliated to the Afghan Government have announced that talks are still continuing between the government and the Taleban group and the Taleban group has promised not to attack Kabul.

Iranian Envoy Expresses Concern Over Fighting

LD1502164495 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the current changes in Kabul, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan met this afternoon with President Borhanoddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, in charge of the organization of Jam'iyat-e Eslami Afghanistan [Islamic Society of Afghanistan] and the minister of state for foreign affairs of Afghanistan, and discussed with them the recent changes in that country.

At this meeting, Mr. Haddadi expressed Iran's concerns over a possible attack on the Shiite-inhabited region located in the western part of Kabul where ten thousands Shiite people are living. He said: Iran hopes that the government of Afghanistan, by using self-restraint and wisdom, prevent the killing of the innocent people.

Our country's ambassador emphasized the need for creating understanding among all the groups in Afghanistan as the first practical step towards the return of tranquillity in Afghanistan.

Mr. Haddadi also met and conferred with Mr. Mazari and Mr. Akbari, officials of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Afghanistan [Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan].

The reports available from Afghanistan indicate that the fighting among the rival groups still continuing.

India

Paper Criticizes Raphel Remarks to U.S. Congress

BK1402133795 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 13 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "The U.S. Prejudice]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although Robin Raphel's statements have always been the butt of Indian criticism, this outspoken lady, who directs the South Asia desk, for the first time had to suffer the scathing criticism of the elected representatives of her own country. In an attempt to twist

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and conceal the facts as she testified before the congressional House subcommittee concerning South Asia, Ms. Raphel stated that the United States was in favor of granting Japan and Germany permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. Apart from these two, no other country was even under U.S. consideration. But the questioning from the representatives made her waiver from her claim. According to her, India is a big country and occupies an important position in the world and hence India technically deserves permanent UN Security Council membership. She also added that India might be prevented from becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council since India is burdened with a "heavy political load." This means India does not deserve to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council since India is embroiled in a dispute with Pakistan, has not signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, nor stopped its missile program. Had similar arguments been used against China, it would not have received permanent Security Council membership at all because China not only has a long standing dispute with India, it was involved actively in the civil wars of Korea and Cambodia. Moreover, China never stopped its nuclear program or missile production. Concerning human rights issues, China does not care two hoots about the Western point of view. Yet despite all of these impediments, China became a permanent member of the UN Security Council because it served U.S. interests.

The reaction to Robin Raphel's argument was not as hostile as it was to her statement about Pakistan's role in spreading terrorism. When questioned by Gary Ackerman, the former chairman of the House subcommittee, about why an order was not issued to confiscate property from the three organizations that claimed responsibility for the explosion that rocked Jammu on Republic Day or why no action was taken against Pakistan for supplying weapons to the terrorists, Ms. Raphel's answer was totally unconvincing and indigestible even for the members of the U.S. Congress. She said the administration knew that the Kashmiri terrorists were getting financial help and small arms from some outside source and that it was suspected to be from Pakistan. U.S. officials then talked to Pakistan and received assurances that such supplies had been fully stopped. But Ms. Raphel admitted that these supplies have not "totally" stopped. As a matter of fact, the U.S. Government's quandary is this: It will have to declare Pakistan a terrorist country if it admits that Pakistan is instigating violence in Kashmir and supplying arms to terrorists. But the United States does not want to do so at the risk of losing its influence on Pakistan and keeping India under threat. However, Ms. Raphel's ludicrous position was betrayed when she answered a question from Sherrod Brown. Mr. Brown asked why there was no mention of the Kashmiri Hindus' plight in the report on human rights violations. Ms. Raphel replied that this was a refugee case and not a case of human rights violations since they stayed in camps. She failed to explain on what basis the Nepali refugees in Bhutan could come under the purview of human rights. In fact, the U.S. arguments concerning India are becoming so progressively illogical that even the representatives of the American people find them to be totally misleading.

ASEAN Secretary General Addresses Trade Meeting

BK1402123595 Jakarta THE JAKARTA POST in English 14 Feb 95 p 8

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jakarta (JP)—ASEAN Secretary-General Ajit Singh, in a joint commission meeting with India yesterday, cited a lack of information as the impediment to better bilateral trade relations.

Speaking at the opening day of the second Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee meeting between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India in New Delhi, Singh said that this communication has prevented relations from reaching their true potential.

"In a nutshell, the problem really boils down to a lack of information and a lack of communication," Singh said yesterday in his speech obtained by THE JAKARTA POST.

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The second commission meeting will take place in New Delhi before moving to Goa, where the talks will close on February 17.

"The challenge before us is how to exploit the full potentialities which exist," said Singh, who is leading a delegation of some 40 senior ASEAN officials to help boost cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, science and technology.

One of the main topics to be discussed by the delegates during the meetings will be a report produced by an experts group that was established at the first commission meeting in Bali in January 1994.

Two-way trade between ASEAN and India increased from U.S. $2.2 billion in 1990 to U.S. $2.5 billion in 1993, much of which favored India's balance of accounts.

"What the report clearly points to is the fact that trade between ASEAN and India is indeed small compared to the potentials which exist," Singh remarked.

"The experts group report concludes that even where ASEAN countries are major importers and India is an exporter, most ASEAN countries import little or none of their requirements from India, and vice-versa."

Singh noted the need to tackle the issues and suggested concrete steps to remedy them. He later suggested that the ASEAN delegates not overlook the potentials of the Indian market, which includes a high-income consumer group of over 160 million people.

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Meanwhile, Singh said that ASEAN and India should work with other developing nations to prevent such issues as labor standards and environmental concerns from being used as new protectionist barriers in world trade.

"We have to be vigilant that in striving to improve the lot of our workers, issues such as the so-called social clause are not attached as conditionalities in any new trade relationship." Ajit Singh was quoted by AFP as saying.

ASEAN and India should work closely with other developing countries to ensure the newly-formed World Trade Organization (WTO) serves the interests of all its members, the Malaysian official said.

Developing nations have expressed worry at attempts by advanced countries to introduce a "social clause" that would link such issues as labor standards and environmental concerns to world trade.

Such a clause could provide for the restriction or prohibition of imports from countries or industries that do not adhere to stipulated standards, hurting the exports of developing nations.

Singh noted a Thai proposal to set up a growth triangle comprising India, Sri Lanka and Thailand that could encourage trade and investment links between ASEAN and India.

Editorial Points Out Lessons From Mexico Crisis

BK1002152995 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 6 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "A Hemisphere Apart"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The $48 billion revival package for Mexico prepared by the US with the help of IMF and a few developed countries is remarkable and unprecedented. It shows that there is an institutional mechanism to bail out countries in economic crisis provided the country in question is a super power or its close friend. The size of the package and the US Congress's refusal to ratify the first package, which involved a $40 billion US loan, suggest that such a package may not be prepared for just any country. Potential damage to the fortunes of thousands foreign investors is the pressing concern. The package will fulfill the short term objective of stemming the flight of capital from Mexico. But the Mexican government will have to take long term measures, including reducing in the current account deficit from the present eight per cent of the GDP, and free floating the peso instead of pegging it on the dollar, to get out of the crisis. They will also have to reduce their dependence on hot money.

The most important lesson that India should draw from the Mexican crisis is that there is nothing wrong in borrowing internationally. But the crucial issue is how the borrowed funds are used. If this money is used for consumption purposes, as happened in Mexico, it is bound to erupt in a crisis sooner or later. It would, however, be wrong to relate too much with the Mexican situation. There are a few fundamental differences between the recent Mexican crisis and India's external balances. Unlike Mexico, which had a huge current account deficit, India's is around one per cent of GDP. In fact, India needs to remove import restrictions from consumer goods to increase competition in this sector and to use its foreign reserves more effectively. The peso is convertible on the capital account, the rupee is not. The savings rate in India is far higher than Mexico's. And the fact that Mexico will get a huge $17.8 billion immediately from the IMF to stem the crisis reveals that India and Mexico are in different leagues when it comes to international support. However, the Mexican crisis does make it clear that no country can afford to

Editorial Cites Political Results of Inflation

BK1602101895 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 14 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Election and Inflation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The skill of Manmohan Singh's officers could be judged by the fact that as his party was preparing for polls in six state assemblies, prices were sky-rocketing. According to the inflation statistics received from the Finance Ministry, in the last week of January, the inflation rate jumped to 11 and one-half percent. This is the pinnacle as far as rate of inflation during the current financial year is concerned. Given to waxing and waning continuously, this sharp jump in inflation was not a mere coincidence. For two weeks it remained more than 11 percent, although in this financial year the rate of inflation has surpassed the 11 percent mark at least four times so far. Our senior officials in the Finance Ministry, who gloat merrily every time the inflation rate slides below 10 percent and believe they have won the battle, keep conspicuously silent when this rate makes such sharp jumps. It is not that the rise in the inflation rate has started from any particular sector. The prices of all commodities are sky-rocketing, which has a telling effect on all classes of people. As is obvious, the maximum effect is felt by the weakest section of our society, and the consequences their growing discontentment could have on the coming elections are very well known to the Finance Ministry officials and the Congress Party leaders.

However, there is nothing unusual in the prices shooting up in January and February. Normally prices rise just before the presentation of the annual budget. Moreover, it is quite natural for the prices to rise just before an election. Notwithstanding the stringent measures adopted by the chief election commissioner, Mr Sheshan, to stop extravagant expenditure during the elections, money is still spent recklessly and freely, although that is not "visible" now. The financial managers engrossed in setting our economy right must be quite aware of the psychological pre-emptive effect of the budget and of the price rise from the prospects of massive spending in the coming elections. Maybe the

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government officers wonder why they should try to meddle into something that is inevitable. However, are Manmohan Singh and his trusted financial experts aware of the political implications of inflation, which can severely damage their much-vaunted economic reforms? As a matter of fact, much could have been done had there been only the psychological impact of the budget and spending on the elections. That is, arrangements could have been made to siphon off money from the market. But because of the economic glasnost, there are now so many factors influencing the market that the available skill of our financial wizards looks woefully inadequate to control or check them. One of the causes attributing to this rising inflation is the swelling coffers of foreign currency reserve. To reduce this, the Reserve Bank did take some measures, like changing the rate of interest, etc. Despite all this, how could the voters be prevented from seeing the real face of the economic reforms and realizing their true implications? Can anyone offer any convincing argument to explain the failure of the human element in these economic reforms? Nevertheless, if these economic reforms negatively affect the citizens now, they will undoubtedly afflict the government later. The fact that no one is beyond their reach is quite clear from this example.

Article Examines Issue of Restoring Iraqi Ties

BK1302091195 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 7 Feb 95 p 9

[Article by K.P. Nayar under the rubric "Diplomacy": "Reviving ties with Baghdad"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The detention of Gulf Splendour, an India-bound ship at the Gulf port of Umm al Quwain following its interception by the US navy about three weeks ago, would ordinarily have been dismissed as another of those problems that plague commercial shipping from time to time.

But these are extraordinary times for Indian diplomacy in the Gulf and it is necessary to look into the unsavoury incident for there is much more than meets the eye.

Documents handed over by the Bangalore-based importer of Gulf Splendour's cargo to the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi show that the ship's cargo originated in Iran and not in Iraq as alleged by the US navy. Papers handed over by the vessel's all-Indian crew to the Indian consulate in Dubayy also show that Gulf Splendour did not violate UN sanctions against Iraq.

The detention of the vessel did, however, coincide with the permission given to India by the Sanctions Committee of the UN to send medicines worth Rs [rupees] six crore to Iraq as a humanitarian gesture. The medicines were subsequently handed over to the Iraqis last week by a four-member Indian delegation of two MPs, one journalist and a member of the National Commission of Minorities.

Military operations over the Gulf waters have a curious history of mistakes: the Americans ought to know this more than anyone else. During the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, Saddam Husayn's air force mistakenly bombed a US naval vessel USS Stark, killing several American servicemen. Towards the end of that war, the Americans downed an Iran Air passenger plane, mistaking it for an Iranian Air Force plane.

Apologists for the latest US naval action in the Gulf are claiming that if the India-bound cargo on Gulf Splendour was, indeed, loaded in Iran, the Americans may have made a mistake. On the other hand, a deliberate mistake by the US is more than likely, so that it serves as a warning to India not to give in to the temptation to be soft on Iraq.

After all, the truth is that New Delhi has been softening its attitude towards Iraq even though it may not have said so. The process started in September 1993 with a visit to New Delhi by Mr Jaber Omer Al-Douri [name as published], the permanent under-secretary in the Iraqi Foreign Office.

The visit of Mr Al-Douri was the first high-level contact between Baghdad and New Delhi since Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war. The visit represented a turning point in Indo-Iraqi relations: Up to that time India had turned down Iraqi requests for such visits from Baghdad.

Mr Al-Douri's visit was kept under wraps during the six days that the Iraqi official was in India. A statement on the talks was released by South Block [External Affairs Ministry] after the Iraqi delegation left India.

Seven months later, the Iraqi foreign minister arrived in New Delhi and held extensive talks with the Indian leadership. Meanwhile, Iraq sent an ambassador to India even as New Delhi beefed up its mission in Baghdad. The despatch of medicines however, is the most high-profile and visibly symbolic action by New Delhi in favour of Baghdad since the war for the liberation of Kuwait.

Having set the stage for an eventual revival of normal relations with Iraq, Indian diplomacy is entering the most challenging and difficult phase of building bridges with Baghdad. Statements by two Iraqi ministers to the Indian delegation, now in Baghdad, suggest that the Saddam Husayn regime has learnt nothing from the bitter experience of going to war over Kuwait.

The ministers told the Indians that if New Delhi was to wait till the sanctions were lifted to start negotiations on trade and joint ventures, India would be too late in the race for construction contracts in Iraq. The arrogance in the statement apart, it betrays a lack of comprehension about the predicament in which Iraq finds itself today.

There is, however, a strident pro-Iraq lobby in this country which may well be taken in by the rhetoric of the leadership in Baghdad. Iraq owes India several billion dollars. Instead of veiled threats to cut India out of the reconstruction business, the Iraqi ministers ought to have addressed the question of unpaid debts in their talks with the Indian delegation.

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Once the delegation returns from Baghdad there will be an orchestrated campaign in this country to highlight the plight of the poor, the aged and the innocent children in Iraq who are suffering the effects of the UN sanctions. Indians must resist the temptation to be swayed by emotions and take a hard-headed view of their national interests on this score.

There is a case for reviving normal relations with Baghdad in the long run. But this cannot be on humanitarian or altruistic considerations. India can expand its ties with Iraq only if Iraq can offer this country something in return. Even so, India will have to carefully weigh any Iraqi offer against its opportunity cost in the rest of the Gulf.

The delegation which carried the medicines to Baghdad last week has brought relief to the Iraqi people. Now this delegation should consider doing India a favour by extracting a commitment from their interlocutors in Baghdad that when the sanctions are lifted, long-term contracts would be signed for the supply of these medicines with Indian companies which gifted them.

After all, commercial rules stipulate that pharmaceutical companies can give away five per cent of their production as samples. It will be a triumph for India's economic diplomacy if the medicines sent to Baghdad last week can help Indian companies secure a foothold in the Iraqi health market.

Firm Develops Receiver for Military, Civilian Use

BK1602054195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore, has developed an indigenous global position systems receiver for both civilian and military applications. The chairman and managing director of the company told newsmen in Bangalore that the receivers can be fitted in aircraft, helicopters, and on the ground. It has been supplied to two military users for trial.

Paper Urges Rao To Be More Open About Reforms

BK1302110895 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 13 Feb 95 p 9

[From the "New Delhi Diary" column by A.K. Bhattacharya: "Elusive Consensus on Reforms"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Prime Minister, Mr P V Narasimha Rao, has often talked about the emergence of a national consensus on economic reforms in India. In one of his recent interviews to a foreign publication, Mr Narasimha Rao has even said that this consensus on reforms is one of the major achievements of his Government.

Has there really been a national consensus on economic reforms in India? The answer to this question cannot be in the affirmative. Even many of Mr Narasimha Rao's own colleagues in the Union Council of Ministers would disagree with his proposition that a national consensus on reforms has emerged. Not long ago did the Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, tell a gathering of foreign investors that neither was there any consensus on the introduction of an exit policy for labour among major political parties, including the Congress, nor would such a policy of hire and fire be politically feasible, at least for another couple of years.

The Finance Minister was not wrong. Indeed, even still today there is no agreement on the various aspects of economic reforms within the Congress, let alone the Opposition. What, however, has emerged in the last three-and-a-half years is a realisation that foreign investment per se is not bad for the country's economy. This realisation is now being shared not only by the Congress, but also by almost all other political parties—be it the Left Front constituents, the Janata Dal or the Telugu Desam.

Mr Narasimha Rao's mistake has been to wrongly equate the policy on economic reforms with that on foreign investment. He seems to have argued that the proof of a national consensus on economic reforms is the fact that State Government of West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, which despite being ruled by the Left Front, Janata Dal and Telugu Desam, respectively, have rolled out a red carpet for foreign investors.

What he may have ignored is the fact that a policy on foreign investments is only a small component of an economic reforms programme. True, an open door policy on foreign investment is an offshoot of radical changes in the Government's industrial policy and laws on foreign exchange regulation as well as large monopoly industrial as large monopoly industrial houses. But an economic reforms programme is also about restructuring a host of other existing areas such as the fiscal economy, industry, labour, social sectors, the financials sector and the legal system.

The Prime Minister cannot claim today that all the political parties are agreed on introducing an exit policy for labour or opening up the insurance sector to foreign competition or even the slashing of subsidies on fertilisers and food. In sharp contrast, no political party is opposed to foreign investment. Even the BJP welcomes infusion of foreign capital into all areas barring consumer non-durables like soft drinks. Thus, the consensus on economic reforms Mr Narasimha Rao has been claiming is only partial.

There are of course good reasons why most political parties have decided to woo foreign investment. Even the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr Mulayam Singh Yadah, is now keen on attracting foreign investment in his State. The new policy to freely allow foreign investment has stepped up economic activities in the country creating more job opportunities. Thus, there are rich political dividends to be tapped by political parties by attracting more foreign investment in the states where they are running the Government. The Left Front Government in West Bengal has realised this and begun to

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assiduously attract foreign capital. The same can be said of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

In all this, there is a lesson for the Prime Minister, If he wants a consensus on all other areas of economic reforms among all political parties, he should fine-tune the reforms package in such a manner that it promises to benefit more people. The inherent objective of all reforms is to make the system more efficient and more productive. There is then no apparent reason why reforms should be unfriendly to the people.

During the eighties, almost everybody in this country opposed the introduction of computerisation in the railway reservation system. But now that computerisation has been achieved, nobody minds it and everybody, including railway employees, has benefited from it. A time has come when Mr Narasimha Rao should talk more about concrete benefits of the proposed reforms before introducing them. Reaching a consensus on them and making them acceptable to the people will then be less difficult.

First Phase of Manipur Assembly Elections Begins

BK1602070895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Manipur, polling for the first phase of elections in 20 assembly constituencies in the five hill districts began at 0700 this morning. Our Imphal correspondent reports that voters started turning up at the polling stations in the Senapati District before the start of the poll, braving rains. In Churachandpur District also, in spite of foggy weather, voters have started have started coming up at different polling stations. Reports from other districts are awaited.

About 500,000 people are eligible for voting. One hundred and eighteen candidates are in the fray. While the Congress-I is contesting all the 20 seats, the Manipur People's Party has candidates in 16, the Janata Dal in 13, the Samata Party in 19, the Kuki National Assembly in six, the Congress-S in five, the Federal Party-Manipur in seven, and the Janata Party in two. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the Manipur Hill People's Council, the National People's Party, and the Samajwadi Janata Party have put up one candidate each.

Of the 845 polling stations, 293 have been declared hypersensitive. Over 3,000 personnel will supervise the polling. Two hundred additional companies of paramilitary forces have been deployed to ensure free and peaceful polling. The second phase of polling will be held on Sunday in 39 of the remaining 40 constituencies in the three valley districts. Election in the Lamsang seat has been countermanded following the killing of a candidate. Counting will be taken up on Tuesday [21 February].

Iran

U.S. Opposition to Russian Nuclear Cooperation Viewed

LD1502144095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1102 GMT 15 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The negative response given by Russian officials to the request of the United States that Russia should cancel its plan to transfer nuclear technology to Iran has elicited certain reactions. In the opinion of media circles, Washington's weak diplomacy has once again been unable to achieve any success in imposing economic sanctions against Iran. In their reaction to Washington's pleading requests, Russian officials have stressed the inability of the United States to offer any convincing reasons and have added: The United States' repeated protests against nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran are aimed at driving a serious rival away from the international scene; the Russians, therefore, view these protests with suspicion.

Now, in light of the fact that the United States has also experienced failure in its policy of trying to eliminate rivals in Europe and Japan, it can be predicted that Washington's diplomatic machinery will be facing increasing domestic complaints, since, before now, too, the U.S. State Department has been the target of harsh and severe criticism from Congress members and from the factions [as heard] in that country.

Opponents of U.S. foreign policy programs believe that Warren Christopher's repeated requests and his unrealistic emphasis on the point that Iran is trying to obtain nuclear weapons could lead to lack of credibility and disgrace for the United States in the world. First of all, such requests and claims have not been accepted by any country in the world except for the regime in Tel Aviv. Second, Washington's emphasis on this point is interpreted as meaning that the U.S. Administration does not accept the views of the International Atomic Energy Agency and chooses to disregard that agency's statements deliberately and on the basis of suspicious motives.

On the other hand, in the current circumstances, when the United States desperately needs to present a good image of its foreign policy, that country's interference in the commercial transactions of other countries will inflict the greatest harm on the United States. This is especially so since the issue in question here is the peaceful use of a kind of energy which is used extensively in today's world and in many regions.

In addition to this, the emphasis placed by the United States on Iran's possible and potential capabilities in the field of nuclear weapons—and in circumstances in which the actual and existing capabilities of a regime such as

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the Zionist one has been forgotten—is viewed with great suspicion by the world and causes general hatred against that country.

At the same time, in the opinion of some political analysts, by pointing the finger at Iran as a potential and actual enemy of world-devouring policies, the U.S. foreign policy machinery has produced results other than the ones it intended. To put it more clearly, in the current circumstances, when most Islamic and non-Islamic societies are opposed to world-devouring policies, the United States is unwittingly and indirectly presenting Iran as a friend and ally of the wronged people of the world. This is precisely the behavior that will drag the United States to destruction in the end; just as, even now, this behavior has turned that country into a monster in the service of Zionism, with the U.S. secretary of state and other American officials mindlessly repeating the ideas of the Zionists.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Meets With Ministers, Advisers

NC1602101795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 16 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani met with ministers, deputies, and presidential advisers last night and emphasized the need for further exchanges of views and further coordination among the officials serving the country. He stated: All the officials in the country's executive branch are conscientious and hard-working people and definitely there is not a more devoted group in the world.

Referring to the people's extensive presence at the ceremonies marking the 11 February revolution, the president stated: The sagacious leadership of the wise leader of the Islamic Revolution and the services rendered by the officials of the Islamic system have led to the continued active presence of the people on the scene of the revolution.

Addressing the executive officials of the country, he emphasized: The people understand and are grateful for the elevation of progress and the achievements in the country. However, they also have some expectations; and we should strive to gradually solve these difficulties through planning and programs.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that serving Islam and the Koran and striving to elevate the Islamic system is a source of pride for the officials of the country and stated: The Islamic Republic of Iran is a divine gift in our hands which has been handed down to us with God's special favors at this juncture. The president stated that satisfying God is the most important reason for efforts by the Islamic Republic's officials and added: The Iranian people are among the world's most intelligent and devoted people and are enamored with the Islamic Revolution and its spectacular gains. They also recognize the services rendered and efforts by the officials of the country.

The president said: Our people have shown that they are truly sensible and alert people. A great deal of propaganda is disseminated in an attempt to disenchant the people. However, the difficulties of the people have not clouded their understanding. This is the situation in Tehran, in the villages, and in remote areas; and wherever we go we see that the people truly love their revolution.

The president added: One mistake is made in propaganda. They say that the people separate the revolution from the acts of the officials and that they love their revolution. I do not accept this because these two cannot be separated. If the people did not understand that the revolution is to their benefit and that the revolution has served them, improved their situation which is much better today than it was in the past, and instilled more hopes for the future in them—if this was not so—then the people would not have been as they are. Of course, they may have more expectations and I accept this. The people—whether justly or unjustly—have expectations that are not fulfilled. But they understand that the country is in the process of reconstruction and that much progress is being made. Probably they expect things to be better than this; and possibly this is a just expectation in certain cases.

VVIRI Head on Broadcasting, Future Plans

LD1502203295

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian at 1555 GMT on 15 February carries the 48-minute recorded "Listeners' Hour" program. This week, the announcer interviews Dr. 'Ali Larijani, the managing director of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, VVIRI.

Larijani discusses his performance one year after being appointed to the post. Larijani describes various new programs that have been introduced, including extra television news bulletins. An unidentified reporter asks members of the public to comment on whether the radio and television programs have improved. Most of those interviewed respond by praising the achievements. However, one person complains that the programs still are far from being satisfactory.

On future plans for VVIRI, Larijani says: "We are definitely going to open a new countrywide radio network, which will be named The Youth Network. We are currently working on this. We might open another radio network later. The new radio network will open during the latter days of the coming year.

"We are also planning to have four countrywide television networks by the end of the Second Five-Year Economic Development Plan [2000]. In addition, there will be a provincial television network to broadcast news of the provinces.

"Currently we are studying other means of broadcasting, such as cable television or transmission of television programs which require decoders for a particular group of

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viewers. For instance, research workers and students might wish to watch special programs for their research work.

"We have recently set up two institutes named Sima Film and Saba Company in order to utilize resources of the private sector. The Saba Company is working on cartoons and animation. I think that not enough has been done in this field. Our literature has good subjects, which can be produced in animated form. The Sima Film Institute is mainly in touch with the private sector in order to produce programs for television."

Rial Plunges to New Low Against Dollar, Gold

NC1502192395 Paris AFP in English 1540 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 15 (AFP)—The Iranian rial has plunged to a new low, losing around 20 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar and gold in the past two days and 70 percent since the beginning of the year.

The price of gold continues to rise sharply despite a move by the Central Bank to sell large quantities of gold coins to the public.

An 8.13 gram (0.3 ounce) coin was traded at 535,000 rials on the open market on Wednesday [15 February] against 450,000 two days earlier, while the dollar jumped from 3,800 rials to 4,400 rials during the same period on the black market, according to press reports here.

The Central Bank froze the price of the U.S. dollar at 2,680 rials two months ago in a bid to stop its wild fluctuations, but the move only prompted the creation of a black market for the greenback.

Other major currencies have been allowed to float and they have registered more moderate rises of 10 to 15 percent during the past two days.

The new collapse of the rial is considered a serious setback for the government, which introduced a string of measures late last month to tackle the country's monetary crisis.

The Central Bank has been selling large quantities of gold coins at a lower rate than the market in the past few days amid massive publicity, but the effort has failed to curb speculation on the precious metal.

The daily RESALAT on Wednesday blamed the current crisis on the Central Bank's "mismanagement." But experts have attributed the situation to a shortage of hard currency in Iran and rising demand.

In a bid to stop the outflow of hard currency, the government recently took measures to force exporters to repatriate their hard currency and stepped up a fight against illegal imports and hard currency trafficking—estimated to cost the country between three to five billion dollars per year.

But the measures have so far failed to stabilise the market.

The English-language daily IRAN NEWS urged the government on Wednesday not to content itself with "ineffective and transient placebo measures and adopt a long-term approach" to tackle the country's monetary crisis.

*Black-Market Foreign Exchange Rates

95LA0104D Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Division—Yesterday the price of the American dollar exceeded 3,000 rials [R], reaching R3,050, during a study of the black market.

RESALAT's economics correspondent reports that foreign exchange brokers easily buy and sell foreign exchange on the free market these days, and they can easily be seen along Ferdowsi and Manuchehri streets. These dealers calmly announce the rates and claim they will buy dollars at the highest prices.

One of these dealers, who asked that his name not be printed, told our correspondent: Today (Saturday) [15 January] the selling price of the dollar has dropped. Last Wednesday it was up to R3,100, and then that same afternoon it dropped to R3,070. A foreign exchange buyer who had come to the market said in an interview with our correspondent: Despite the fact that some money changers get foreign exchange from the Central Bank, they impose the greatest restrictions and limitations on buyers and applicants, and few people with passports and airline tickets can obtain rials from the money changers at the R2,680 rate. This has actually opened a window in the black market and has caused the transfer of foreign exchange to move from these money changers to this market. Consequently those wishing to buy foreign exchange are going to the black market brokers.

Continuing, this buyer added: Currently, in giving foreign exchange to buyers each money changer acts according to his own special preference. Some give foreign exchange only after a certain time of day, some only issue it in exchange for a guaranteed bank check, and others employ other methods, in order to meet the needs of the fewest customers.

The increase in the price of the dollar on the free market was predicted by some experts, and this year it has exceeded R3,000.

IRNA reports that the dollar's value against the rial in transactions by Tehran's money changers remained stable on Saturday compared to its Thursday prices, but the German mark and the English pound increased.

On Saturday afternoon the values of the dollar, the mark and the pound were R2,680, R1,980, and R4,600, respectively, against the rial with Tehran's money changers, representing increases since Thursday of R30 for the mark and R50 for the pound.

In trading on Tehran's gold market on Saturday, the price of a Springtime of Freedom coin with His Holiness

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the Imam's (peace be upon him) picture on it rose to R301,000 with an increase of R6,000.

A Springtime of Freedom coin with the old design was selling on the Tehran gold market Saturday for R330,000.

3,000 Bodies Found From Iran-Iraq War

LD1502181295 Tehran IRNA in English 1526 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 15, IRNA—The bodies of 3,000 Iranian combatants who attained martyrdom during the 1980-88 Iraqi-imposed Iraqi [war] on Iran have been found and most of them identified, an Iranian military official said on Wednesday [15 February].

The bodies, 600 of them from Tehran province, have been found by a special battalion in charge of locating those reported missing in action (MIAs) on battlefields in west and south Iran, Brigadier General Mir Feisal Baghirzadeh, head of a special committee for locating the MIAs said. General Baghirzadeh told reporters that the bodies of 85 percent of Iranian combatants killed in the war within the Iranian territory have been found. Up to 17,000 bodies have so far been discovered in former battlefields of Iran-Iraq war.

Despite talks between Iranian and Iraqi officials last year, the Iraqi Government has not been cooperative in searching for the MIAs, Bagirzadeh said. Meanwhile, he said, Iran, on humanitarian grounds, has always expressed readiness to solve this problem which is a matter of social and psychological concern for the government and the people of Iraq.

Some 1,000 bodies of Iraqi soldiers killed in the fighting with Iranian combatants during the war have been discovered and will be exchanged for bodies of Iranian combatants if Iraq agrees to it, he added.

Referring to the process of locating the bodies, he said none of the organizations which had claimed they could be of help in this regard, have not rendered any help. He said even countries such as Germany and England have refrained from selling the machinery needed for cleaning up the minefields. The Iraqi Government has not yet handed over maps of the minefields, he said.

*Joint Textile Venture with Egypt's Miratex

95LA0104C Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, IRNA—The chief of the Executive Council of the Iran Industries Development and Reconstruction Organization went to Egypt Friday [13 January] at the head of a delegation of this organization's experts to attend regular meetings of the Miratex Company's board of directors. The Public Relations Office of the Iran Industries Development and Reconstruction Organization reports that the Miratex Company's board of directors meets once every three months in Egypt, and that Iran's representatives also attend.

Fifty-one percent of the shares of the Miratex Textile Company's shares belong to Egypt and [as published, no figure given] percent of its shares belong to the Iran Industries Development and Reconstruction Organization, which represents the Islamic Republic of Iran.

*Information on Second Five-Year Plan Activities

95LA0104H Tehran RESALAT in Persian 2 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Division—Based on the announced quantitative goals in the Second Five-Year Plan Law, oil exports are estimated at $72.658 billion, and nonoil exports are estimated at about $27.5 billion for the years 1374-1378 [21 March 1995-20 March 1999] (totaling about 100 billion rials [R]).

Correspondents report that in view of the tables in the Second Five-Year Plan, which were recently published, total exports during the Second Five-Year Plan will be about $92 billion, and during this period the nation's foreign exchange commitments will fall by 8.2 billion [currency omitted as published].

Based on this report, the government's general budget in the Second Five-Year Plan is expected to be R237.311 trillion, of which 50 percent will be oil revenues, 26 percent will be tax revenues, and the remaining 24 percent will come from other revenues. The government's general expenses will exceed R30.049 trillion in the year 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995], and will reach R60.825 trillion in the year 1378 [21 March 1999-20 March 2000].

Likewise, 56 percent of the government's total general budget in the Second Five-Year Plan (equal to R133.157 trillion) is set aside for current expense credits, and the remaining 44 percent (equal to R105.029 trillion) is set aside for the nation's development credits.

In view of the amount of revenues and expenses, during the Second Five-Year Plan the government's general budget will have a deficit of R875 billion, which can be made up through returns on annual payments.

This report adds: During the Second Five-Year Plan, gross domestic development will increase by an annual average of 6.2 percent, and total gross investments by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan will reach R14.063 trillion, which breaks down to R932 billion in the agricultural sector, R1.146 trillion in the industrial and mines sector, R1.287 trillion for water and electrical power, R819 billion in the oil and gas sector, R338 billion in the construction sector, R2.188 trillion in shipping affairs, R313 billion in the communications sector, R2.50542 trillion in real estate affairs, R2.531 trillion in other services, and R9.538 trillion in the general services sector.

Based on this report, in view of the 12.5-percent growth rate in the volume of currency in circulation and the money base, during the Second Five-Year Plan, the

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volume of currency in circulation will go from R53.858 trillion in the year 1373 to R96.845 [as published] in the year 1378, and the money base will go from R19.789 trillion in 1373 to R35.585 [as published] in the year 1378.

It is worth mentioning that the general level of prices during the Second Five-Year Plan will have an average growth of 12.4 percent.

*Provinces' Decisionmaking Increases

95LA0104E Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Division—Most of the areas of concentration in the 1374 [21 March 1995-20 March 1996] Budget Bill are based on the programs approved in the Second Five-Year Plan Development Law.

Mohammad Baqer Bahrami, deputy from Asadabad and chief of the Majles Administrative and Employment Affairs Commission, announced the above and told our correspondent: Next year's budget bill provides more than 14.569 trillion rials [R] for national development expenses; this is a 30-percent increase compared to the year 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995].

He added: Likewise in the 1374 budget bill, about R2.224 trillion is provided for development budgets in the provinces, which shows a growth of 15 percent compared to the current year.

Bahrami said: One of the characteristics of the 1374 budget is the policy of decentralization. The provinces have acquired a greater role in decisionmaking. He discussed the budgets for the government companies. He said: The financial situation for these companies can be seen somewhat more clearly in this budget bill than in previous years.

Continuing, the deputy from Asadabad said: In the 1374 budget bill, 12 percent of the government's total general revenues, excepting gas and oil, which is a figure around R1.976 trillion, will be collected by the provinces, and one of the characteristics of the budget revenues sector next year will be that some revenues will be spent by the provinces.

The chief of the Administrative and Employment Affairs Commission discussed current expenses in the 1374 budget. He said: This sector has grown about 17.5 percent, and is estimated to be at R26.146 trillion. Among the significant elements of the increase in the current expenses sector are the adherence to social justice, the provision of subsidies on basic goods, reinforcing the budget for the Imam's Aid Committee, the Martyr Foundation, for implementing the Martyr Raja'i Project, and procuring credits to add 20 percent to the indicator for the government workers wage table.

In the same regard he added: In the current expenses sector of the 1374 budget special attention has been given to cultural and educational affairs such as the Voice and Vision, the institutions of higher learning, education and training, and the medical sciences universities, and credits of R5.688 trillion have been provided.

The chief of the Majles Administrative and Employment Affairs Commission expressed the hope that in the second consultation on the budget bill an effort will be made to enact measures to increase the wages of government workers and retirees and to bolster the retirement fund.

In conclusion he said: One of the notes approved in the Second Five-Year Plan Law concerns the procedure for increasing worker wages. The government is required each year to make the necessary provisions to increase worker wages in accordance with the rate of inflation, and the Majles is also considering this matter in approving the budget bill.

*Petrochemical Unit To Be Built

95LA0104I Tehran RESALAT in Persian 9 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Khorramabad, IRNA—The governor general of Lorestan announced that in the Second Five-Year Plan—with joint investment by the National Bank, the Ministry of Oil, and the private sector—a company producing petrochemical products will be built in Lorestan.

In the first phase, this company will produce 10,000 tons of province poly-vinyl. Province poly-vinyl and its derivatives have uses in various industries, including shatterproof glass, vehicle manufacturing, adhesives, paint, and paper.

All Villages To Have Electricity

LD1002135395 Tehran IRNA in English 1258 GMT 10 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Semnan, Feb. 10, IRNA—Deputy Minister of Energy, Malaki, said here last night that during the Second National 5-Year Development Plan (to start late March), rls 16,000 billion would be invested on energy generation.

He said the Energy Ministry had plans to set up 6 to 7 thousand kilometers of transmission lines to cover all villages that do not now have electricity, and accept an additional 2.5 million power subscribers.

The deputy minister of energy said that since the triumph of the Islamic revolution enegry installations in Iran have had a steady growth of 3.5 to 8 times. He said energy generation in the meanwhile had grown three times and the number of power subscribers had grown eight times.

He said the Energy Ministry has plans to rehabilitate power plants that were damaged during the war years.

Economic Division Announces New Pricing

*Prices Set for 24 New Products

95LA0104G Tehran RESALAT in Persian 4 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Division—The prices for some other goods included in the market regulation

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project and subject to government penalties were announced by the Consumer and Producer Protection Organization.

The Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Commerce reports that these goods include tillers, water and agricultural motors, syringes and disposable medical supplies, polyethylene pipes, jute, pipe and PVC connectors, wide agricultural tilex and nylon, cotton seed cake, wheat bran, and dried sugar beet candy.

Based on this report, a 4.5-horsepower tiller was sold to the consumer for 2.42 million rials [R], 7.5-horsepower tillers were R2.75 million, and 13-horsepower tillers sold for R3.3 million.

This report states: The price of a Drummond 6LA motor at the factory door was R7 million, and the price of a Drummond 6LAT motor was R7.5 million. Of course, as in the past, this product is distributed with permission from the Ministry of Agriculture (Foundation for the Development of Agricultural Machinery).

Based on the aforementioned report, the price of a 2 cc syringe was R115 to the consumer, 2.5 and 3 cc syringes were R125, 5 cc syringes were R130, 10 cc were R150 rials, and insulin was set at R150.

This report adds: The sale price of each "Angiocoat" [word as transliterated] sold from representative to buyer throughout the country was R1,380, each box of a complete set of serum was R745, and each pair of surgical gloves was R850.

Based on this report, the price of a kilogram of polyethylene pipe with a seal to indicate it meets standards, sold to the consumer for R3,740, and without the seal the price was set at R3,550.

Likewise the price of a kilogram of PVC pipe with a seal to indicate it meets standards and with adherence to the communications standard, sold to the consumer for R3,570, without the seal which indicates it meets standards, it was R3,388. The price of a kilogram of PVC connectors to the consumer was announced as R6,118.

This report states: The price of a kilogram of agricultural-width nylon sold to the consumer at R3,060, and the price of a kilogram of Tilex sold for R3,285.

Based on this report, the price of a kilogram of dried sugar beet candy was R150, rice seed cakes with at least 23-percent protein and 17- to 19-percent fiber was R300 per kilogram, and wheat bran was R135 per kilogram.

It is necessary to mention that with regard to dried sugar beet candy, municipal and shipping taxes are calculated. Likewise with regard to rice cakes, the buyer must provide the bag, and municipal taxes are added, but other costs of bagging, loading and bag-fastening are also taken into account. The buyer is also responsible for the bag with regard to wheat bran, and the costs of bagging, bag-fastening, and loading are taken into account, but it is not subject to municipal taxes.

11 Tehran Retail Goods Rise

95LA0104B Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] The retail prices of 11 consumer goods and food items increased on Thursday, 22 Dey [12 January], compared to last Thursday (15 Dey [5 January]), while the rates for 16 other goods remained fixed.

IRNA's correspondent reported from the city of Tehran last week that sugar cubes, sugar, hand and washing machine powdered laundry detergent, and half-kilogram parcels of Bahareh tea all sold at the approved price at the major stores and retail shops.

At the same time solid vegetable shortening, foreign and Iranian butter, and imported cheese were not available at the large stores and retail shops.

Last week the price of beef increased 6.6 percent, eggs increased 6 percent, lamb increased 5.6 percent, chicken and chick peas increased 5.2 percent, split peas and second quality tomato paste increased 5 percent, first quality tomato paste increased 4.5 percent, Thai rice increased 2.9 percent, American rice increased 2.7 percent, and beans increased 2.6 percent.

25 Consumer Items	Thursday 15 Dey [currency omitted as published]	Thursday 22 Dey	Changes
Product			
Half-kg Bahareh Tea	1,900	1,900	
Red foreign tea, per kg	6,000	6,000	
Chicken, per kg	2,850	3,000	5.2 percent
Mutton, per kg	5,300	5,600	5.6 percent
Beef, per kg	6,000	6,400	6.6 percent
Average Iranian Rice, per kg	2,300	2,300	
American Rice, per kg	1,800	1,850	3.7 percent
Thai Rice, per kg	1,700	1,750	2.9 percent
Block sugar cubes, per kg	1,210	1,210	approved
Boxed sugar cubes, per kg	1,260	1,260	approved

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25 Consumer Items	Thursday 15 Dey [currency omitted as published]	Thursday 22 Dey	Changes
Product			
Sugar, per kg	1,100	1,100	approved
Vegetable shortening, in 4.5-kg blocks	10,500	10,500	approved
Lentils, per kg	2,100	2,100	
Beans, per kg	1,900	1,950	
1.6 percent Chick peas, per kg	1,900	2,000	
5.2 percent Split peas, per kg	2,000	2,100	
5 percent Imported cheese, per kg	3,660	3,660	approved
Iranian cheese, per kg	3,600	3,600	
100 grams pasteurized butter	600	600	approved
1st quality canned tomato paste	2,200	2,300	
4.5 percent 2d quality canned tomato paste	2,000	2,100	
5 percent Eggs, per carton	3,300	3,500	6 percent
450 grams hand laundry detergent	900	900	approved
500 grams machine laundry detergent	1,200	1,200	approved

Variety of Pipes, Paper Announced

95LA0104A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] The Consumer and Producer Protection Organization announced the prices for various kinds of pipes and steel profiles produced by domestic factories, and the prices for the craft and floating paper produced by the Iran Wood and Paper Industries Company as follows:

A: Type of Pipe	Unit	Water and Gas Pipe Samples [currency omitted as published]	
		Black	Galvanized
1.2 inch pipe	kg	1,100	1,600
3.4 inch pipe	kg	1,070	1,200
1 inch pipe	kg	1,020	1,380
1.25 inch pipe	kg	1,010	1,350
1.5 inch pipe	kg	1,010	1,350
2 inch pipe	kg	970	1,320
2/plus inch pipe	kg	940	1,250

Various Types of Profiles

A: Type of Profile	Unit	Approved Price
Profiles below 100mm	kg/rials	1,150
100-360 mm profiles	kg/rials	1,120
Profiles above 360mm	kg/rials	940
Group profiles	kg/rials	1,120
Profiles for 110 columns and higher	kg/rials	850
Profiles for 18 columns	kg/rials	900
Profiles for 18 columns and higher	kg/rials	850

The goods are delivered at the factory door. The cost of shipping is added. Municipal taxes of one percent of the factory sale price are added at the bottom of the statement. The total profit and cost of wholesale and retail respective are 3 and 7 percent. Likewise, in view of the above regulations, the wholesale and retail rates will be 3 and 7 percent respectively. Likewise, in view of the above regulations, the wholesale and retail rates in the nation's various regions will be set and announced by the provincial general offices of commerce.

Various Types of Paper

Price of Paper	Unit	Maximum Factory Sale Price [currency omitted as published]
Craft Paper	kg	790
Floating Paper	kg	720

Likewise one percent in municipal taxes will be added at the bottom of the statement.

*Butter Still Scarce in Most Stores

95LA0104F Tehran RESALAT in Persian 12 Jan 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Division—Because of the rate set by the government, in the week ending 10/9/1373 [30 December 1994] pasteurized butter was not to be found in the city's stores.

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Based on the weekly report from the Central Bank's Office of Economic Statistics on the average price of some food items at the retail level in Tehran, in the week ending 10/9/1373 the price of nonpasteurized yogurt and dried milk increased this week compared to last week.

He said the price of Iranian cheese was stable. The price of a carton of eggs increased from R3,100 to R3,550.

In the week being studied, with the announcement of the rationing of sugar cubes and sugar at the adjusted price, distribution of these things began in the city.

Sugar Cubes and sugar were being sold at the free-market price at some stores in the city, but vegetable shortening was being sold at the free-market price only in some Qods, Sepah, Shah, and Rusta stores.

In the week reported, the price of nonpasteurized yogurt and dried milk increased 1.7 and 3.4 percent, respectively, but the price of Iranian cheese did not change. The price of eggs increased 2.3 percent.

In the week reported, due to the failure to obtain the price for loaf sugar and vegetable shortening by the stores in various parts of Tehran, it was not possible to compute its average price. The price of tea remained fixed and was being sold at the official price.

Statistics on 1993 Mining Activities Released

95LA0112A Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 8 Jan 95 p 8

[Article by Z. Najafi: "Facts and Figures Regarding Mining Activities in 1993"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Based on the latest statistics and information available at the Mines and Metals Ministry, the following table regarding the performance of the country's various mines in 1993 is worthy of consideration. In the table, as can be observed, the mineral commodity, the number of mines for each mineral commodity, the number of people involved in production at the mines, and the level of production, or real extraction, in one year (1993) have been presented.

Ministry of Mines and Metals General Office of Mining Production Statistics—Year 1993

No	Mineral Commodity	Number of Mines	Personal [as published—probably Personnel]	Real Production (Tons)
1	Limestone	175	2,067	24,406,657
2	Gypsum	230	2,220	8,432,720
3	Crushed Stone	318	2,134	5,400,813
4	Marble	316	5,446	5 194,148
5	Travertine	52	539	367,469
6	Granite	25	323	33,706
7	Silica	64	509	974,638
8	Industrial Soils	36	129	135,757
9	Feldspars	15	66	79,364
10	Talc	8	75	27,455
11	Mica	3	28	8,301
12	Dolomite	11	76	302,648
13	Boron	2	6	1,260
14	Expanded Clay	25	231	413,660
15	Salt (Rock & Solar)	69	867	1,050,384
16	Sulphur	1	6	DevelopmentStage
17	Realgar/Orpiment	3	40	468
18	Fluorite	3	129	11,077
19	Celestite	3	46	14,454
20	Barite	16	386	224,665
21	Bentonite	8	49	44,118
22	Kaolin	8	103	137,695
23	Perlit	1	5	5,000
24	Alunite	1	—	DevelopmentStage
25	Sea shells	2	129	90,000

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Ministry of Mines and Metals General Office of Mining Production Statistics—Year 1993 (Continued)

No	Mineral Commodity	Number of Mines	Personal [as published—probably Personnel]	Real Production (Tons)
26	Sodium Sulphate	30	380	296,973
27	Refractory Soils	18	1,280	121,455
28	Magnesite	8	126	65,236
29	Asbestos	2	30	80,807
30	Red Ocher/Umber	6	52	5,527
31	Turqoise	1	23	1
32	Huntite	8	38	306
33	Coal(Coking & Steam)	46	23,152	1,597,503
34	Iron Ore	17	3,932	8,689,873
35	Manganese Ore	5	187	75,149
36	Lead & Zinc	14	2,211	Ores-749,676
37	Chromite	12	2,247	Ores-128,918
38	Copper	9	1,081	Ores-12,105,854
39	Bauxite	2	37	156,548
40	Gold	1	140	Ores-247,903
41	Diatomite	2	—	Development Stage
Total	—	1,572	50,521	71,677,916

Subsequent to the examination of the table, additional points regarding the readers information and knowledge will be presented. It should be pointed out that there are no statistics available on sand, find [as published] sand and clay mines since such mines are under the supervision of the Interior Ministry and not the Mines and Metals Ministry.

1) The sum total of all mining production in 1994 was 71.7m tons. This figure, in comparison with the 1992's overall production of 62.2m tons, represents a growth rate of 15.4 percent. This increase in mining production relates primarily to the more efficient extractions of copper, iron and to some extent limestone.

2) The number of mines transferred (over to the private sector for exploitation) in 1993 amounted to 1.572. This figure in 1992 was 1329. Therefore in 1993 greater number of mines were transferred over to the private sector than in 1992. It should, however, be pointed out that because of generally adverse economic conditions and specially the recession in the housing construction, the raise in the price of machinery and equipment and foreign exchange fluctuations, some of the transferred mines were shut down and were unable to continue activity.

3) The number of people active in the exploitation of mines in 1992 was 50,725. This number dropped to 50,521 in 1993. This drop in a span of one year was due to the campaign to reduce the number of employees at major mines particularly those operated by the public sector.

As can be noticed from the above table, some 40 mineral commodities were extracted from Iranian mines during the past year. And various exploratory activities were undertaken which continue into the present. The presence of this many mineral resources in one country and the considerable diversity with regard to the existence of these valuable mines is a topic that should be carefully considered by the Islamic Republic government officials. And certainly with increased investment and attention to the mining sector, Iran has the potential to become a reputable and powerful country in the mining field. In this connection reference should also be made to the question of processing of mineral commodities as an important field. Fortunately, positive measures have been instituted in this regard as well. But the measures have not been enough, and there is still room for improvement, so that the possibility for the export of these items to overseas markets would improve further.

Pakistan

Bhutto on U.S. Visit, India, Afghanistan Issues

BK1402042595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 14 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has repeated her offer to the opposition for a meaningful dialogue to consolidate democratic institutions and resolve national issues on the basis of consensus. She was speaking at a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner she hosted in honor of journalists in Islamabad last night. The prime minister said that the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] and Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo Group oppose horse trading. She said that her government does not believe in buying the loyalty of elected MP's. She said those who are

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deserting the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group have not joined her party, adding that they made the decision on their own because of differences with their party leadership. She said her party does not believe in the politics of revenge. Politics and crime are totally different and should be kept separate.

The prime minister said the judiciary enjoys full freedom. She said the People's Democratic Front believes in the rule of law and strictly adheres to it. She said the process of accountability will continue. The PPP promised the people that it would eliminate corruption and fulfill the pledge to root out corruption from society.

Benazir Bhutto said that the World Bank has duly acknowledged the present government's economic achievements. It is now possible for us to meet our targets. We are committed to reducing the overall deficit in GDP from 8 percent to 4 percent during the current fiscal year. Due importance is being given to the neglected sections of society, including women, and steps have been initiated for their welfare.

On the Kalabagh Dam, she said that such important projects cannot begin unless there is a consensus on them. She said that the objections in this regard can be resolved technically [fanni towr par]. On the Ghazi-Barotha hydroelectric power plant, she said that 90 percent of its financing has been agreed to by the World Bank and other investors and the remaining 10 percent will be completed soon, after which the project will be completed expeditiously.

The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan is prepared for meaningful talks with India. She said that the eight nonpapers forwarded by India and Pakistan can form the basis for a resumption of bilateral talks. She said that an impartial plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions is the only solution to the Kashmir issue. She categorically said that national integrity and sovereignty are the top priorities and nothing can take precedence over Pakistan's sovereignty.

Replying to a question about the acquisition of F-16's and her scheduled visit to the United States, Benazir Bhutto said Pakistan and the United Sates have cordial and mutually beneficial relations in the political, economic, and security fields. These relations have gone beyond the Pressler Amendment. The F-16 issue is one of the topics that will be discussed during her visit. She said the United States is not pressing for a nuclear rollback, nor is there a threat to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. Rather, we are at the forefront in eliminating terrorism. She said that Pakistan proved this by handing over a terrorist.

Responding a question about Afghanistan, the prime minister said: We do not favor anyone; we support the restoration of peace in that county.

Referring to the law and order situation in Karachi, the prime minister said that despite the involvement of external hands in creating a law and order situation, the Sindh Government is wholeheartedly endeavoring to restore peace and order in the city. She said that the federal government is actively implementing its 121 billion rupee [figure as heard] package to provide civic amenities in Karachi.

Yusuf Arrest Seen as Attempt To 'Appease' U.S.

BK1602042795 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 11 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Pakistan's Defense Capability—A Warning to India"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting the other day on a statement by Rajesh Pilot, the Indian minister of state for home, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said that if India carries out another aggression and war breaks out between Pakistan and India, it would not be a war of a thousand years or even a thousand hours but only a few minutes and India should not be oblivious to the potential devastation. In his statement, Rajesh Pilot cited Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's speech and said that Benazir's father used to speak of a thousand year war, but Pakistan lost East Pakistan in only a few days; even now Pakistan cannot defend itself from Indian attacks. Pilot's statement was very provocative.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman's reply silenced the Indian minister. He warned India not by implication but in clear terms that the next war will only last a few seconds and will bring inconceivable destruction and devastation. This clearly indicates that the Pakistani Government has bravely displayed its nuclear capability. Contradicting the U.S. claim regarding the capping of Pakistan's nuclear program, the statement assures the Pakistani people that they possess a nuclear deterrent and that there will be fierce fighting if India commits the folly of launching an aggression against Pakistan. If this claim is not hollow, then Pakistan is really in a position to strike a heavy blow against India through its nuclear capability.

There should be no apprehension or misgivings about our nuclear program following the Foreign Ministry announcement. The people of Pakistan should rest assured that their future is very safe and the country's independence, security, and sovereignty can never be bruised.

Pakistan began its nuclear program after the Indian nuclear explosion and made rapid strides in strengthening its defense. Pakistan acquired the nuclear deterrence capability despite U.S. and other Western opposition. This is why, unlike in 1948 and 1965, India does not dare to disturb Pakistan despite all the disputes.

Indian occupation forces are carrying out atrocities in Kashmir. They are also holding some parts of Siachen. The Kashmiri freedom fighters have made the lives of the more than 600,000 Indian soldiers in Kashmir unbearable, though, and God willing Kashmir will become a cremation site for India just as Afghanistan

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became a graveyard for the Soviet Union. The valiant soldiers and officers of the Pakistani Army have accomplished a feat by turning the Indian advance in the highest reaches of Siachen into a retreat.

During its early-1987 Brass Tack military exercises, India rehearsed artillery attacks against cities in Sindh. The Pakistani armed forces, during their Zarb-e-Momen I and II exercises, proved that Pakistan could penetrate into east Punjab in the event of an Indian aggression in Sindh. In these columns we have always stressed the Koranic verse: "Keep your horses ready to deal with your enemy."

The majority of Pakistanis believe that Indian hegemony cannot be accepted and Pakistan's defense capability should be made stronger than India's. It is unfortunate that some elements in Pakistan speak of strong and stable friendly relations with India and maintain contacts with Indian intellectuals in pursuit of this objective. These elements, claiming a so-called realistic approach, want to turn Pakistan into a cowardly and impudent nation and are trying to force us to bow to a country that was ruled by Muslims for 1,000 years. Under the new world order, the United States is also pressuring Pakistan to accept Indian hegemony.

We do not want to turn the United States into our enemy, but we do not feel it is appropriate to relinquish our defense capability and surrender to the Hindu rulers—making Pakistan like Sikkim or Bhutan—in pursuit of U.S. friendship. It is imperative that the Pakistani Government show no weakness to the United States, our friendly looking enemy. The world is going to reach the heights of civilization in the 21st century. The United States no longer has the capacity to enforce the law of the jungle as in the dark ages by terrifying others with its might.

Unfortunately, the Pakistani Government is showing weakness. It has agreed to set up a U.S.-sponsored and funded underground nuclear explosion monitoring center in Chakwal and has now surrendered Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, a suspect in the New York bomb blast, to the United States. Earlier, Pakistani nationals wanted in drug smuggling cases were sent to the United States. According to our information, preparations are underway to send another half dozen people as sacrificial goats to the United States in a bid to appease it. This signifies weakness. The Pakistani Government needs to keep itself free from U.S. pressure in the future. The fallacious perception of Indian fifth columnists in Pakistan who are trying to make Pakistan afraid of India needs to be rejected. Let us honor Pakistan's freedom as an independent and self-respecting nation and learn to protect it. We should not be ungrateful to God. Pakistan is capable of protecting its independence, sovereignty, and security. The entire nation should stand as an impregnable fortress before the enemy and thereby meet the needs of the country's defense.

Government Seals Border With Afghanistan

BK1602143995 Islamabad THE NATION in English 16 Feb 95 pp 1, 14

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt) Karachi-Federal Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar has said that Afghanistan may be divided after prolonged civil war. He said that Pakistan has closed its border with Afghanistan to stop the inflow of refugees.

He was talking to newsmen at State Guest House. About Talibans he said that the people of Afghanistan are fed up with intra-fighting and we told Afghans that they could not get the fruits of Jehad due to civil war. He said that in a short period. Talibans, emerged as a big force. He made it clear that Pakistan did not play any role in the organisation of Talibans neither it has assisted them.

He said that Pakistan has adopted neutral posture towards Afghanistan and the situation of Afghanistan is the internal affair of Afghans. He said that government is closely monitoring the changing situation is in Afghanistan and the border authorities have been asked to seal the Torkham border. He said that every future government of Afghanistan will be pro-Pakistan due to the fact that the requirements of Afghanistan are linked with Pakistan.

He explained that purchases made by these visitors and tourists in Pakistan was affecting our trade pattern especially the leather industry which was beginning to be threatened.

Babar said that the government will shortly publish a negative list to check the misuse of the Afghan transit trade. [passage omitted]

Commentary Considers Resale of U.S. F-16's

BK1502125095 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 15 Sep 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Prospects of Pak F-16 resale"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A major question that haunts our military establishment these days not only concerns the selection of the aircraft to replace the F-16s embargoed under the Pressler Amendment but also where to get the money to purchase the new weapon system. With little foreign exchange reserves, frequent crop failures, dwindling revenue from overseas Pakistanis and remote chances of striking oil in the near future, the issue has assumed paramount importance for the national exchequer.

The sale of weapons, which are stuck in warehouses in the United States, to a third country would have met the expenses to some extent. However, as time passes (with nobody in sight to purchase the equipment, including the F-16s), the problem of the establishment to solve the imbroglio and dispose of the weapons seems to have gained further urgency. In any case, considering the mounting prices of new weapon systems, $1,230bn, stuck in 222 major and minor military contracts with the United States firms, would not have gone very far.

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Understandably, with $800m tied up, the Pakistan Air Force is the biggest victim of the Pressler Amendment. Of this amount, $658m have been paid for 27 F-16s, the aircraft stored at Davis Mountain Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona. With almost no chance of getting them, the Air Force realises that it has to find their replacement and that too as early as possible. Unfortunately, the efforts to purchase the Su-27 Flankers have not gone far.

There are strong suspicions lurking in the defence circles that India played a major role in sabotaging the Pak-Russia arms deal. Whatever the case, it is not only the question of availability of a weapon system but also whether it is affordable. The Su-27s are affordable but may not be available. The Mirage 2000-5 is available but it is a terribly expensive option. So much so that it is almost out of reach of a third world country like Pakistan. As technology becomes more and more advanced, the prices of new defence equipment go out of reach for most of the third world countries.

In any case, Pakistan will have to sell the embargoed F-16s in order to raise funds for a new weapon system. However, efforts to sell the aircraft to a third country have not met with success. Generally speaking, we can identify seven reasons for this.

First, there has been a recession in the arms market, primarily because of the changing threat perceptions in the post-cold war period. Nations are still investing in air power and enhancing their strike capability to counter regional threats but at a slower pace. The Gulf and South-east Asia are the only two exceptions where arms buying spree continues. However, the cash-inflow crisis and the Arab-Israeli peace process have affected the arms market in the Middle East as well. Like other weapons manufacturers, the aircraft industry has also been forced to cut down its prices and offer incentives to buyers. Lockheed is now offering the United States Air Force (USAF) the latest Block 50/52 F-16s for only $20m in flyaway condition. The buyer can choose between the General Electric ISE or Pratt & Whitney engine and will get an aircraft with radar along with a full tank of gas. For other customers, the F-16s of similar configuration are available for $23m. With a downward trend in aircraft sales and cut-throat competition, it has become difficult to sell all types of fighters in the market. The Pak F-16s are no exception.

Second, modernisation of the existing fleet has become the first priority of the air forces throughout the world. They find that upgrade packages for their ageing aircraft are the best option as the price of new fighters soars out of their reach. So they are spending $3m-6m on upgrading the aircraft to fly it into the Twenty-First Century. Also, other advantages of upgrading are that pilots remain familiar with the aircraft, maintenance techniques remain the same and spare parts inventory is regained. Therefore, most air forces, who could have bought the Pakistani F-16s, are planning to upgrade their weapon systems instead of purchasing new ones. Two examples are those of the Singapore and Philippines air forces who are modernising their F-5s. The same also applies to the Pakistan Air Force which is upgrading its Mirage III's and V's because it cannot afford to retire them.

Third, Pakistani F-16s stuck in the US are of an older A&B model carrying advanced systems through an Operational Capabilities Upgrade (OCU) programme which puts it at par with newer model F-16Cs. Thus, they are of an older model with advanced features. The customers of F-16Cs are unlikely to buy older model F-16s though they share many of the features of the F-16Cs. The air forces which bought the same model of Fighting Falcons along with Pakistan are now planning to replace them. One such air force is the Royal Norwegian Air Force which would make a decision about the F-16 successor in 1997-98 and expect deliveries by early next century. At a time when some F-16 operators have started evaluating its successors, fewer countries would be interested in purchasing older model Pak F-16s. If they have to buy F-16s, they will look for C and D Block 50/52s not the older models.

Fourth, of the 17 F-16 customers, 13 have already reordered the aircraft. Those who bought the F-16A/Bs in the first phase are now buying the latest model F-16s. According to Daniel M Tellep, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Lockheed, during 1994 Singapore and Turkey placed orders for 58 F-16s, all new models. At the end of 1994, the number of firm orders for the fighter stood at 487. The manufacturers think there are little chances of other countries picking up more F-16s except for the USAF.

Fifth, the avionics on the aircraft were selected in the late eighties. Since then, there have been great strides in all spheres of avionics, multimode radars, weapons, cockpit improvements and electronic warfare suites. Also, new self protection devices like chaff, flare dispensers, jammers and defence suppression devices have come up. Most of the prospective customers would like to have upgraded F-16s and it would not suit them to purchase old weapon system and upgrade it.

Sixth, the US plans to sell 400 to 500 Air National Guards and USAF Reserve unit F-16A/Bs, which have flown around 4000 hours, have affected the market. Customers can buy these aircraft for between $3m-4m and extend their lives by spending a further $4m-5m. There is no need for buying new F-16s. Not only have Pakistan's chances of selling the embargoed F-16s considerably reduced but the sale of surplus aircraft has also worried the US aerospace industry. Lockheed needs 24 F-16 orders each year to keep its production lines open. But they may not be coming forth because some prospective customers will not go in for cheaper second-hand Fighting Falcons. The American defence industry has formed Excess Defence Articles Working Group to express its concern with the US Department of Defense on the sale of surplus equipment. It certainly undercuts the industry's chances.

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Lastly, Pakistan cannot afford creative financing and offer long-term loans on the stuck aircraft to new customers. There is simply no question of deferred payment. The Philippine Air Force reportedly raised the issue of credit when Pakistan offered to sell the F-16s to Manila.

As time passes, the chances of selling the F-16s to a third country further diminish. Also, it would be impossible to recover the whole amount. Not only that, Islamabad continues to pay the parking fees for the aircraft which are quickly losing their value in terms of money. According to an estimate, if the Pakistani aircraft had remained at the desert storage, their value in two years time would have depreciated by a least $2m-4m without their ever being used.

The Pakistan Air Force had selected the aircraft which was the best in terms of performance and price. However, the Falcon project (Lockheed name Peace Gate I-IV) has been consumed by American diplomatic expediency. The problem now is that the PAF is unlikely to get another fighter which can match the F-16 both in terms of efficacy and cost. Therefore, there cannot be a one-to-one unit replacement. The service can go in only for cheaper and less capable fighters like the F-7s and Mirage III's to fill the gap in its sticking power. The Fighting Falcon is down and out. The good thing for the PAF, however, is that the fighting spirit survives.

Article Views Success of Bhutto Foreign Policy

BK1302061695 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 4 Feb 95 p 7

[Article by S.A. Rizvi: "Govt's diplomacy saved country from isolation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A country without an effective foreign policy is like a ship in the sea sans rudder, swaying from one end to the other. Pakistan's foreign policy had been under constant review in the face of the changing geo-political situation. Countries formulate their foreign policies to protect their national interests—be it security, political, economic or strategic and respond to the changes in the international relations which in recent years have witnessed vicissitudes of vital importance.

The country faced the spectre of being declared a terrorist state, its long-standing relationship with the United States under strains, misgiving abounding about its peaceful nuclear programme, its international credibility steadily eroding and the country coming under growing propaganda blitz by India. With a penchant for international relations, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto wasted no time, in putting Pakistan's messy foreign policy house in order. One year on the country's foreign ties have almost taken a U-turn. Another self-evident indicator of a shift for the better is the splurge of foreign investment into the country.

Pakistan's foreign policy by and large has been guided by a few factors which will till today continue to have a deep impact on its formulation. "Pakistan's foreign policy basically a reactive policy", stated a writer on international affairs. A perennial security threat stemming from Indian ambition to dominate South West Asia and simmering Kashmir dispute in the face of Indian intransigence continue to influence the formation of Pakistan's foreign policy as they find ways to counter it. The perception of Indian threat continues to haunt the policy-makers as they survey their options to deal with their security environment.

Strong ties with the Muslim world is another very important determinant of its foreign policy and the desire was even found in pre-independence period. Pakistan at the moment is under intense international pressure on its peaceful nuclear programme while India is trying hard to deflect the world's attention from its human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir by putting the blame on Pakistan for the indigenous popular resistance against its illegal occupation of held Kashmir.

An Oxford educated woman with a deep commitment to democratic values, have made Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto popular leader world-wide particularly in the west. Despite heavy odds and domestic pressure, she has clearly emerged as "a moderate and balanced leader" in a Muslim country where women are still striving hard to get their basic human rights.

Benazir's government first task embarked on mending fences with the United States as the multi-dimensional relations between two countries could not have been allowed to be overshadowed by the differences on certain issues. It is success of Pakistan's diplomacy and its convincing pleading that the nuclear issue must be looked in the regional perspective and that Pressler Amendment is not serving the purpose to check nuclear proliferation. US State Department has recently refused to accept the argument of 19 Senators and Indian propaganda that Pakistan possessed a nuclear bomb.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto achieved a great breakthrough when she convinced the foreign investors particularly US businessmen to come and invest in Pakistan to the tune of 30 billion US dollars, staggering amount by any standard. US Secretary on Energy O'Leary descended with about a 70 top US investors, who signed 16 agreements in energy sector and committed to spend 4 billion US dollars. Why? What will be its impact? No businessman in the world would invest in a country without lucrative incentives and political stability.

Pakistan so far has been able to resist the American pressure while maintaining its principled stand on the nuclear issue. Pak-US have divergence of views on the nuclear issue but these should not be allowed to eclipse their relationship by making it hostage to one or two issues. Pakistan's principled stand on the nuclear issue not to sign Non-Proliferation Treaty unless India does so, seemed to be cutting the ice in US because the Clinton's

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administration has not only ignored Mian Nawaz Sharif's statement that Pakistan possessed a nuclear device but has also sent an even biggest delegation of its top entrepreneurs to make investment in Pakistan.

President Clinton's Administration's moves to amend the Pressler Amendment which could not be approved by the Congress is another indication of such thinking. "The misgivings that Pakistan would come under pressure after US investment are misplaced. There should not be apprehension on this count. Pakistan cannot remain aloof from the world. There cannot be successful policy without a stable economy", stated by Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Prof N D Khan. Willy Brandt once said that economics will determine the future of the world. The investment by US businessmen in energy sector has already begun to have a spill over impact on the rest of the world.

Benazir government's moves to open a land route between Pakistan and Central Asian States while securing safe passage through Afghanistan is another step forward towards the regional economic integration of these countries. Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and all the Central Asian States are also members of Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) which if properly promotes can be an effective organisation to buttress the economy of the member States. On Kashmir Benazir's government while following a pragmatic approach has moved all forums to increase pressure on India which in recent months is compelled to ease its restrictions to allow the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] diplomats visit the held Kashmir and release the two important Kashmiri leaders Syed Shah and Abdul Ghani Lone.

Kashmir remains on the top priority of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto hence it is on Pakistan's initiative that an OIC contact group on Kashmir is constituted which will be devising a more effective way to support the cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. But one should not lose sight of the fact that knotty issue like Kashmir takes long time to settle unless it has the backing of the entire world particularly the permanent members of the UN. Pakistan's intensive diplomatic efforts for a peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute coupled with the worsening human rights situation in the held Kashmir would isolate India.

The civilised world will not overlook world peace, democratic principles, justice and human rights for the sake of certain economic benefits. At present, India is the biggest country in the world to fan terrorism and is busy in organising sabotage, instability and terrorism in all her neighbouring States. The most important need of the hour is to control Indian expansionism otherwise it will bear most dangerous consequences for this region as well as the entire world.

It is strongly hoped that international community, realising the gravity of situation in the held Valley would exert pressure on India to honour its commitment made in the UN Security Council and in the Simla Agreement and accept a solution based on the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir.

PRC To Build New 200-MW Nuclear Power Plant

BK1502155795 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] China will soon build a new nuclear power plant of 200 megawatt at Chashma. This was stated by the Chinese ambassador, Mr. Zhou Gang, at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lahore today. He said the 300-megawatt power plant built by China in the area is working satisfactorily. The ambassador said his country's total investment in Pakistan stood at $26 billion. Recently, another allocation of $10 million has been made to promote industrial collaboration.

PRC Leaders See Further Strengthening of Ties

BK1502124195 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 15 Feb 95 p 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb 14—Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng have expressed confidence that friendly relations and cooperation between China and Pakistan will further consolidate and develop in days to come.

In their messages to their Pakistani counterparts, President Farooq Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, respectively, the Chinese leaders said both China and Pakistan enjoy traditional cordial relations.

The Chinese leaders sent these messages to Farooq Leghari and Benazir Bhutto in acknowledgement of congratulatory messages on the occasion of Chinese Spring Festival. The Chairman of Standing Committee of the Peoples Congress Qiao, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Chairman National Consultative Conference also sent messages to their Pakistani counterparts.

In his message to President Leghari, the Chinese President said "I acknowledge gratefully the receipt of your congratulatory message on the occasion of the Chinese Spring Festival. I would like to express, on behalf of the Chinese people and in my own name, our sincere gratitude to your excellency and through you to the people of Pakistan.

"I'm confident that the traditional friendly relations between China and Pakistan will be further strengthened in the New Year." The Chinese Prime Minister, in his message to Benazir Bhutto said,

"I wish to extend to your excellency my heartful thanks for your kind message of felicitations on the occasion of the Chinese Spring Festival. I am confident that through joint efforts of our two governments and peoples, the friendly relations and cooperation between China and Pakistan will be further consolidated and developed. May Pakistan enjoy prosperity and her people well- being."

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Sri Lanka

Peace Talks With LTTE Likely 'Next Week'

BK1502135695 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The fourth round of peace talks between the government and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is likely to resume next week. The LTTE has announced in Jaffna that it is ready to change its stand on the Pooneryn camp issue if the ban on goods to the North is further relaxed and arrangements are made to send petrol, diesel, and other fuel to Jaffna without any restrictions. Reports from the North says the LTTE would table this proposal at the peace talks next week and seek a solution. Reports said that the LTTE has expressed its readiness to the make the government's efforts to settle the Northeast problem a success and exchange views regarding the extension of the cessation of hostilities into a permanent truce.

Political sources in Jaffna said that the LTTE had noted with appreciation the holding of the cessation of hostilities for well over a month without any major incidents being reported. However, the LTTE at the next round of talks would call for a general review of the cessation of hostilities and the complaints regarding minor incidents made so far before pushing for a permanent truce.

Meanwhile, a Colombo datelined REUTER report says that stalled peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government and Tamil rebels will resume soon amidst signs that both sides are ready to ease back on hardline positions. I expect the talks to resume in about 10 days time because most of the issues are being resolved, said a Tamil opposition parliamentarian close to the People's Alliance government. He said the problems are related to the carrying of arms by Tamil rebel cadres in the East, night fishing in the North, and the lifting or relaxing of restrictions on some essential items.

A peace memorandum submitted by the people in the South will be presented to the LTTE leader on Friday [17 February]. A peace delegation will take the memorandum to Jaffna. The delegation comprising People's Alliance parliamentarians will leave Colombo Port for Vavuniya tomorrow at 0600. From Vavuniya they will commence a peace walk joined by people from various walks of life from Colombo, (Wahagana), Gampaha, (Gahawala), Kurunegala, Maho, Tammuttegama, Anuradhapura, and Madawachchiya. Parliamentarian, Vasudeva Nanakara, the leader of the peace deelgation said that the delegation and the peace-loving people would travel to Vavuniya in a special train and expect to reach Vavuniya by 1100 in the morning tomorrow, and from there onwards they will proceed to Jaffna and meet the leaders of the LTTE. He said they hope to present a peace memorandum to LTTE leader, Prabhakaran. He also requested those who wish to join the peace walk to meet at the port's railway station before 0600 AM tomorrow. The peace delegation includes representatives of various organizations.

President Reiterates Commitment To Open Economy

BK1502140095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 15 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga in a very frank and forthright address to an international fund managers seminar in Colombo yesterday dispelled their fears and reiterated her government's firm commitment to an open economy. There would be no ad hoc privatization. Privatization would commence as fast as possible. The president said that Sri Lanka was a haven for investment; it should be a financial and transshipment center. She extended an invitation to foreign private investors to invest in the form of portfolio investments at the stock exchange or in the form of direct investments in the country. In order to achieve an ambitious growth target of 8 percent, she reiterated the need for investment in industries and services sectors to expand exports in [words indistinct] new technology and to gain access to new markets.

Mrs. Kumaratunga stressed that maximum facilities will be given for foreign investments. She said that the government was working towards long-term political and economic stability to create the best possible environment for investors. The government has made medium and long-term economic projections in most sectors which will be integrated into a coherent and consistent long-term perspectives (for) doubling income and eliminating unemployment to a large extent by the end of the century. The president maintained that Sri Lanka has many advantages as a haven for investments with tax holidays and short-term incentives. She asked investors to bring any obstacles or complaints to the notice of the government. She reiterated this government has laid the foundation for a sound economy. Private employment generation and the social security net will promote political stability that will eliminate the risk of investing in Sri Lanka.

Minister Discusses New Constitution Draft

BK1102085795 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 24 Jan 95 pp 1, 20

[Report by T. Sabaratnam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris yesterday released to the press the first working draft of the new constitution which provides for the replacement of the executive presidency with the parliamentary cabinet system.

He said: "The draft provides for the Prime Minister to be head of the government and the President to be the ceremonial head of the state."

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He said the new constitution will make parliament the scene of action and the Prime Minister who will be the head of government will be in parliament.

Prof. Peiris said the new draft which is the outcome of the discussions so far held by the Parliamentary Select Committee and the specialised committees working under it will restore to parliament the control over public finance.

At present the President's Fund, the Urban Development Authority and Airlanka function outside Parliament's financial control, he said. The draft which covers all areas except electoral arrangements and devolution provides for the strengthening of fundamental rights and judicial independence, the creation of a Constitutional Council and an independent Public Service Commission, and for the judicial review of legislation, the minister said.

He said fundamental rights had been strengthened by the inclusion of new rights [to] life, liberty and safety, the right to own property individually or jointly, the right to privacy, family, home and correspondence.

The pressmen urged that the right to obtain information too be included. They said the right to information and expression are two limbs of the UN resolution on media freedom and the inclusion of the right for information will strengthen the hands of journalists.

Prof Peiris agreed to consider that request and said the decision to release the first draft was taken by the Select Committee to help generate discussion.

"We welcome discussion. We must reach consensus on fundamental issues. Then only the constitution will stand the test of time," the minister said.

He said the draft proposals have strengthened the process of obtaining remedy by aggrieved persons in two ways. The first was to give more time for the affected persons to obtain remedy. Now, an aggrieved person should file action within one month from the date of infringement. The draft provisions allows three months. [sentence as published]

The other extension permits for a friend or a public spirited person or group to file action against the infringement or imminent infringement. Currently only the affected person is entitled to apply for remedy.

Prof. Peiris said under the existing constitution a law which infringes the fundamental rights or other provisions of the constitution could not be struck down by the courts after it is enacted. The draft provisions permit the courts to strike down any law for being ultra vires to the constitution within two years after its passage into the statute book.

The other areas involve the strengthening of the independence of the Public Service Commission and the Judicial Service Commission.

Consensus has been reached in reforming the electoral system by combining the advantages of the first past the post system and the proportional representation. [sentence as published] The system of preference votes which creates dissension within the political parties will be done away with.

"We are intensely discussing the devolution of powers. Some valuable thoughts have emerged. But they have not been solidified," Prof. Peiris said.

He said the chapter on devolution would be finalised after talks with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. Their views too would be considered.

He said about 90 percent of the political parties had submitted proposals to the Select Committee. The UNP [United National Party] has not submitted proposals. The UNP had indicated that it would not submit proposals of its own. The UNP is participating in the discussions and is making contribution.

The next meeting of the Parliamentary Select Committee will be on February 22. Thereafter the Select Committee will listen to oral representations from political parties.

President: Snap Parliamentary Elections Likely

BK1102091595 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A political package aimed at ending Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has been almost finalized and reconstruction work in the island's war ravaged northeast could begin within two weeks, according to President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Although she refused to give full details of the package, Mrs. Kumaratunga said that she favored extensive devolution of power to the minority Tamil community to end the war. Mrs. Kumaratunga told foreign correspondent's luncheon that the government would rebuild damaged schools, hospitals, highways, and public library in the rebel-held Northern Jaffna peninsula. She said that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] with whom she initiated a dialogue soon after winning the August parliamentary elections had agreed to the reconstruction work. The government has almost completed the draft of the political package they are offering, and it will be up for discussions very soon with other political parties and also the LTTE, Mrs. Kumaratunga said. She described the progress of peace process as satisfactory but not brilliant. But she said that the truce between the military and the rebels was holding very satisfactorily. She hoped that the next round of face-to-face talks between the government and the LTTE will begin very soon as the government was keen to discuss political issues to resolve the conflict. Mrs. Kumaratunga stressed that she has the fullest cooperation of security forces, dismissing reports that senior military officers were opposed to the cease-fire. She said that the truce had allowed the LTTE

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to carry out more political activities in the East from where they had been driven out by the security forces.

Sri Lanka could see snap parliamentary polls by midyear as the government moves to implement constitutional reforms. This was stated by President Chandrika Kumaratunga yesterday. Mrs. Kumaratunga told the foreign correspondent's association that fresh elections may be necessary to ensure that there was no distortion of the unprecedented mandate the People's Alliance party received at the November presidential elections.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga announced yesterday that she was planning a state visit to India and Bangladesh followed by another to France in April. Mrs. Kumaratunga said that she would travel to India toward the end of March and proceed to Bangladesh before she returns to New Delhi again in April for a South Asian summit. She said that she would also address Sri Lanka's donor countries at the annual World Bank meeting in Paris towards the end of April. The seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit will be held in New Delhi in mid-April.

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